SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY
Build-up to Buen Vivir (Latin American)

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this work is to describe the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) as an alternative way of doing economics, guaranteeing the reproduction of the conditions that allow for life, human existence, and the continuation of social life, within a framework of cooperation, collaboration, inclusion, and a democratic vocation.

In this study, a historical-hermeneutical approach was applied to the narrative of 36 source texts extracted from scientific platforms and non-peer-reviewed grey literature, using the keywords: associativity, solidarity, social economy, community, popular economy, enablement, and empowerment. The content analysis of these texts allowed for the identification of evaluation criteria and the interpretation of the findings.

As a result of the research, it can be stated that the SSE is a set of economic models originating from three stages of development: some ancestral, others modern, and the current ones created within systems of technological innovation.

This research allows us to conclude that both the exhaustion of expectations of the current political system regarding the search for alternative technologies for the development of processes, products, and services, and the breakdown in the approach to problems and solutions in which groups, communities, and organizations participate, have been assimilated as elements of the current Social Technological Systems (STS), characterizing innovative ways of doing things through their new methodologies oriented towards social change in societies threatened by energy, environmental, and economic instability crises.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this work is to contribute to the conceptual precision of the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) as a broad-based social practice that advocates for the rights of large masses of impoverished populations excluded from the development plans of modern capitalist societies.

The distinctiveness of the SSE is achieved by differentiating it from other social purposes proclaimed by cooperative organizations, philanthropic corporations, and social enterprises whose operating conditions require prior profit and exploitation of third parties.

Although this is a specialized topic that requires the use of eminently academic language, its development, encompassing everyday matters of exchange, production, distribution, and consumption, could make it accessible to the average citizen.

By the same reasoning, it could be said that this is an old topic, but the truth is that, after so many centuries of discussion, only recently has the tendency emerged to accept that the associative act is what characterizes that specific type of social and political relationship called “solidarity.”

Certainly, acts of reciprocal exchange between people shape and maintain social relations, but it is the individual feeling that follows a voluntary offer or a request for cooperation that commits one to the shared fulfilment of a certain way of acting. In other words, “solidarity” is a relational vision connected to the concepts of “morality” and “ethical life.”

In fact, solidarity as a commitment to collective fulfilment implies a moral concept, a sense of obligation based on a common cause that seeks to transform the normative situation, from one that defends personal interest to one of social responsibility, inducing one's own moral obligations. (Stockdale, 2021)

The topic of the Solidarity Economy is a recent emergence. It considers prosperity and well-being as a meritorious level of social development in which everyone can live more humanely, without the daily worry of survival. This differs from any current of thought resulting from the “European Enlightenment,” whether liberal or Marxist, which conceive of these ends as a result of maximizing mass production. (Boff, 1980)

Furthermore, it helps to develop the concept of social justice elaborated during the Enlightenment, distinguishing between welfare-based, or corporatist, redistribution and “solidarity aid,” which is horizontal and reciprocal in nature,

controlled from the grassroots, and driven by “ethically sound, integrative policies that promote the whole person.” (Boff, 1979)

This is what this book is about. As is well known, for any social project to be mobilizing and sustainable, it must foster broad participation among actors who are progressively, and unintentionally, constructing variations of the economic formats of social practice, and agents who internalize the effectiveness of these practices, following the guidelines of their position in which they act as reproducers of the structures within which they operate.

One might envision that, through the reproduction and articulation of more and more cooperatives, we can move toward a world of interconnected cooperatives at various levels of representation and coordination, with both the market and the state. However, for this to happen, the cooperative system and its values would have to prevail over these two modes of economic redistribution and coordination. In the current reality, cooperativism is heterogeneous, and some partial sectarianism is unavoidable—hopefully surmountable, but not insignificant.

It is necessary to develop another type of associationism, one that addresses the construction of new forms of long-term sociability, with the goal of building a system of "associations of associations" capable of instrumentalizing the state and the market, and not the other way around. In other words, another socioeconomic system that promotes a version of associativism that fosters the construction of a democratic, just society, based on freedom and solidarity, free from the market and the state—a different kind of economy.

A purported community culture involves efforts and actions from the same institutional initiative and direction; therefore, its take-off may require the contribution of external agents, and during its development, different forms of technical assistance would be needed.

The point here is to consider a set of strategies and tactics within an open, transitional social process, always fraught with contradiction. To avoid perpetual conflict, the aim is to gradually gain organic unity at the meso level,

where the material foundations for life are distributed and where the prevailing subjectivity is established.

This requires open-mindedness, the capacity to observe, understand, and learn collectively. It requires activism and a sense of purpose, learning to listen and foster horizontal communication. It requires recognizing existing and potential actors and the diverse economic practices that side with the majorities victimized by the system. It requires clarifying the meaning of such practices through critique, sometimes supported by abstract conceptual frameworks that nonetheless consistently frame the thinking to be materialized.

Democratic politics is based both on a critique of the prevailing system and on the capacity to initiate and/or continue a political process that advances through small, medium, or large transformations. This must always be done based on the active consensus of the actors involved in these changes, while simultaneously consolidating collective subjects; that is, these actors must associate themselves based on shared social and/or political projects.

Community development aims to promote and mobilize human and institutional resources through the democratic participation of diverse population groups, or of personnel in the case of state agencies, unions, professional associations, religious organizations, and other specialized institutions, in order to generate genuine community development in all its aspects: infrastructure and land improvement, economic development, education, political participation, and the promotion of arts and sports, among others.

In principle, it is preferable for the initiative to come from civil society, but the State should also accompany and support the demands for material resources and public policies that favor the growth of an organic sector of worker-managed economic enterprises. All of this depends on the socioeconomic context and the political will at play.

The first chapter of this book deals with the Generalities of the SSE. It begins with the international legitimization of the concept and the points of convergence between the European Social Economy and the Latin American Solidarity Economy.

The second chapter, on the Economic Formats of the SSE, emphasizes the formally invisible plurality unleashed by the economic formats of the SSE embedded within a predominant capitalist system.

The third chapter addresses the Objective Rationality (Max Horkheimer's, 1973) of the SSE, distinct from the subjective (economic) rationality of the capitalist system in which the idea of self-interest takes center stage. Our rationality accompanies that part of the SSE which, by incorporating values guiding the production and exchange of goods inherent to the satisfaction of social needs, seeks to improve the quality of life of individuals.

The fourth section addresses the Regulatory Framework for the SSE in Colombia. While this framework has generally served to promote the so-called solidarity sector, it still exhibits a certain regulatory asymmetry that contradicts the coherence between cooperative principles and commercial regulations, especially when resolving conflicts.

The fifth section discusses Other Forms with a Social Purpose that do not fit the purist concept of the SSE. Here, it is important to highlight the necessary clarity between legal and organizational conditions for obtaining the endorsement of the International Networks of Social and Solidarity Economy (RIPESS).

The sixth section addresses Original and Complementary Initiatives and Innovations of the SSE. The seventh section deals with economic formats both derived from practice and identified by social science. These include ancestral initiatives based on Latin American communities, followed by innovation concepts that are part of the current Social Technology Systems (STS) developed to address the new crises of postmodern society.

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I – THE SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The international legitimization of the concept of the Social and Solidarity Economy

The true orientation and meaning of the international Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) movement were made explicit from its inception in the First Final Declaration of the "First International Meeting for the Globalization of Solidarity," held in Lima, Peru (1997), as follows:

"We, citizens belonging to: popular, peasant, indigenous, women, youth organizations, employers' organizations, worker communities, cooperatives, microenterprise associations, church associations, non-governmental organizations, environmental groups, technologists' associations, development networks, social economy groups, and a coalition of representatives from 32 countries, meeting from July 1 to 4, 1997, in Lima, Peru,

declare:

"First: We are taking into account that: we are under the hegemony of a development model that is showing its limitations, both in the North and in the South, while destroying the planet, generating poverty and exclusion, and ignoring the range of human activities that are of paramount importance to communities, thus posing a threat to the future of humanity; …

…And in an attempt to respond to this situation, we are committed to a process of building a solidarity-based development that challenges the reductive and determining concept of satisfying human needs, the ruthless competition in the market, and the so-called “laws of nature.” The solidarity economy we propose incorporates cooperation, sharing, and collective action, and places human beings at the center of economic and social development…

From the perspective of the “indignados” (the outraged), this first meeting had

succeeded in approving a proclamation rejecting development models based on fierce competition and, alternatively, advocating for the creation of a Social and Solidary Economy (hereinafter: SSE) that incorporated “cooperation, collective sharing, and action,” in addition to “placing human beings at the center of action.” (Poirier, 2024)

Subsequently, between 1998 and 1999, within the context of the growing contradictions and failures of the dominant capitalist system, the French government organized regional meetings between groups of actors from the traditional social economy and the “new economy” movement, where the expression “social and solidarity economy” emerged, thus attempting to reclaim solidarity as a form of resistance against neoliberal globalization.

The SSE had emerged as a unifying concept in which many events, social movements, and intellectual actions managed to bring together their perspectives. Attempts were made to alter the various factors driving the unsustainable global economic system led by corporations.

Amid the neoliberal policies of the Reagan/Thatcher era, not only was it possible to converge on the proposal to create a World Social Forum (WSF), but its first edition in 2001 in Porto Alegre, Brazil, also provided the substantial impetus for the birth of the SSE movement.

It was at the Second World Social Forum (WSF), also in Porto Alegre (January 31, 2002), that the terms "Social and Solidarity Economy" were adopted, signifying an economic counterproposal of an associative and self-managed nature, an alternative to the current neoliberal globalization.

There, the Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of the SSE (RIPESS, by its Spanish acronym) was also created, its concept having emerged from the Second International Meeting for the Globalization of Solidarity in 2001 in Quebec, Canada.

In April 2002, Dakar, Senegal, hosted the First International Meeting of RIPESS, focused on the development of SSE organizations in Africa. The Latin American participants at the meeting, who had come from the 1997 meeting in

Lima and were staunch defenders of their original, more ambitious vision of the solidarity economy, proposed an amendment to remove the conjunction “and.” For RIPESS, then and now, the expressions “social” and “of solidarity” remain inseparable.

The term SSE refers to a socioeconomic model under construction, drawing on experiential studies and conceptual developments about the current concrete reality of a mixed economy dominated by the logic of capital, which relegates the State and, primarily, the informal economy to a secondary and dependent role.

The SSE operates in many countries by experimenting with alternative and traditional economic practices. It is important to make visible previously hidden economic forms, examine and support existing practices that prioritize social norms such as equity, social and ecological sustainability, cooperation, and workplace democracy, moving away from profit maximization, private ownership, and competition. (Borowiak, 2015)

SSE enterprises include: community and associative collectives, both commercial and non-commercial, that generate income with public or civil society organization support; production and marketing cooperatives; worker campaigns; barter networks and clubs; fair trade and finance systems; productive communities; organic production groups; indigenous groups; women's associations; community kitchens; and home delivery services, among others. (Strada, 2012)

Even before its formal establishment, there were groups eagerly anticipating this aspiration. One of them was the International Labour Organization (ILO), which, since its inception in 1920, had expressed renewed interest in developing a cooperative branch. Indeed, the minutes of the 11th session of the ILO Governing Body in 1922 made the first reference to the existence of a Social and Solidarity Economy.

Already underway, at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development "Rio+20" in June 2012, RIPESS proclaimed its full commitment to promoting SSE within the UN system, particularly to encourage countries to

adopt SSE approaches within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2015-2030).

For its part, the ILO, at its 110th International Labour Conference, held on June 10, 2022, contributed to the development of the concept as follows:

"SSE encompasses enterprises, organizations, and other entities that carry out economic, social, and environmental activities of collective or general interest, based on the principles of voluntary cooperation and mutual aid, democratic or participatory governance, autonomy and independence, and the primacy of people and social purpose over capital in the distribution and use of surpluses or profits, as well as assets…"

Finally, the United Nations General Assembly, at its 66th plenary session held on April 18, 2023, updated this same ILO definition, recognizing the SSE's capacity to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The UN proclamation states:

"…Social and Solidarity Economy Enterprises (hereinafter: SSEE) demonstrate a great capacity to adapt to local contexts and offer solutions, particularly regarding employment and decent work, the provision of social services, such as those related to health and care, education and vocational training, environmental protection, including through the promotion of sustainable economic practices,

…the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, access to affordable finance and local economic development…the strengthening of the productive capacities of people in vulnerable situations, the promotion of social dialogue, labor rights and social protection, as well as inclusive and sustainable growth, the creation of alliances and networks at the local, national, regional and international levels, and the promotion of participatory governance and policymaking and respect for all human rights."

Thanks to these ILO and UN General Assembly resolutions, humanity now has a universal definition of the SSE that notably emphasizes the primacy of people and the planet over profits, limitations on the distribution of benefits/surpluses, and democratic and/or participatory governance. The different aspects of this definition help identify what the SSE truly is and what it is for. (Poirier, 2024)

It is worth mentioning the delicate and risky nature of attempting to lump the social and solidarity-based aspects together, since each of these components operates with organizational forms and territories constructed in diverse ways, with different rules and methodologies, and with different historical and cultural specificities.

While it is mentioned that the main motivation among European social economy leaders for fostering the formation of the international SSE movement was the crisis of the Keynesian welfare state, among Latin American solidarity economy leaders, the most frequently cited reasons for joining the new SSE movement have been the mistreatment they suffered under successive dictatorial governments and the exacerbated social dislocations under neoliberal governance that generated poverty, unemployment, and exclusion.

For its part, the European-origin social economy operates with worker-members who carry out economic activities defined in legal statutes that legitimize the solidarity arising among the organization's members to address common needs, contributing economic resources such as labor, tools, and time, among others.

On the other hand, the solidarity economy, which emerged in Europe and is developing in Latin America, characterizes widespread socioeconomic practices, whether or not they follow legal frameworks, that focus on a solidarity-based relationship, either binding or philanthropic depending on the reciprocity between the parties, to serve groups facing social exclusion.

In general, some social economy organizations meet the requirements to be part of the SSE, while others do not. Among the barriers that social enterprises might encounter in being classified as belonging to the SSE, we can mention:

1) Social enterprises can exist without the requirement of being non-profit; that is, they can sell above cost (in other words, European social

enterprises that are for-profit cannot be classified as SSEE).
2) Social enterprises, created primarily to serve individuals or other social economy organizations by providing priority services such as health or education (which are non-market services) to individuals or families free of charge or at low prices, can be non-democratic. (That is, as long as they are not structurally organized as democratic enterprises, they cannot be a SSEE).
3) Social enterprises can be financial entities that provide cultural, recreational, social, and other services to individuals free of charge (however, because they are financial entities, they cannot be SSEE.

Essentially, the fundamental characteristic that the SSEE exhibits is the alignment between the form of ownership and the control exercised over management. In other words, for an entity with social purposes to be classified as belonging to the SSE, it must meet the following fundamental conditions:

1) Collective or communal ownership of a private nature.
2) Self-management in the workplace.
3) Voluntary participation of members in autonomous decision-making.

The greatest challenge and commitment that all SSEE establishments must face is to adopt an approach that:

1) Promote more equitable relationships by recognizing the diversity and dignity of all people.
2) Encourages associationism and solidarity-based social relationships.
3) Prioritizes the care of the material environment and the reproduction of life, setting aside the accumulation of capital. (Vásquez, 2010)

Where does the social economy come from?

In the periods prior to the 18th century (the Age of Enlightenment), non-profit organizations developed their projects following two traditions: the missionary activity of the Catholic Church through its various congregational networks worldwide, and “social organizations” with special ownership and profit distribution systems, politically supported to alleviate and mitigate the effects of poverty. (Salas, 2002)

Welfare was the paradigm of social service, drawn from the values of Christian charity, individual philanthropy, benevolence, and volunteerism, fostering institutional dependence and limiting people's self-development.

Social economy organizations are the resulting response of citizens, initially in England but later throughout Europe, to the confrontations with the consequences of capitalism brought about by the Industrial Revolution (1760-1830). These organizations were built between workers' guilds, united with cooperatives and mutual societies, organized as social and associational movements, and the large employers who supported them.

The first associational movements in general, and cooperative movements in particular, emerged from various nineteenth-century socialist positions in the broadest sense (utopian socialism, Christian humanism, Ricardian socialism, anarchism, and Marxism), although figures from the liberal school also played a role.

Overcoming the failure of paternalistic and religious ideas in earlier social movements and drawing on the associationism of Pierre Proudhon (1809-1865), French agricultural production cooperatives (Fourier and Blanc, 1839), the English consumer cooperatives of Rochdale (Owens and King, 1844), and the German savings and credit cooperatives (Schulze and Raiffeisen, 1850) arose almost simultaneously, in turbulent times. These collective movements would gradually integrate into the concept of solidarity.

The concept of social economy was developed in France by various promoters such as Dunoyer (1830), Le Play (1854) and others, initially based on mutualist organizations as a mechanism of trade union self-protection against disadvantageous changes in labor regulation, later based on cooperative organizations to shelter farmers and rural workers in the face of the expansion of agricultural exploitation and, finally, through consumer and housing cooperatives in the face of the imminent great crisis at the beginning of the 19th century. (Pérez, Etxezarreta, and Guridi, 2009)

From 1845 onward, reaching its peak in 1868, a series of poor harvests, an

inflationary crisis, and a shortage of income necessary for the population to purchase industrial products, goods, and services produced by local artisans not only provoked a long, violent, and almost continent-wide social upheaval known as the Second French Revolution of 1848, but also spurred the political modernization of European countries with their constitutions, national assemblies, and popular sovereignty, characteristic of a liberal state governed by the rule of law.

For liberals, this meant that countries maintained liberty as part of their political ideology (albeit restricted and in contradiction with material equality among people). For conservatives, it represented a gain in that it recognized the political supremacy of the State and its duty to promote well-being. For socialists, it allowed the State to provide them with material benefits such as public services, social investment, intervention in the economy, and above all, in property ownership.

Ultimately, the Revolution of 1848 came to bolster the European modernization agenda for the years to come, supporting the French bourgeoisie's argument for innovating the practice of socialist politics and Saint-Simonian scientific technocracy. This was interwoven with the desire for the government to control the nation's destiny, with the capacity to appeal to a wide range of social categories, not only starving proletarians but also industrial managers and progressive leaders from various sectors of the economy.

Meanwhile, and based on the principles of self-help, self-management, and self-responsibility, Hermann Schulze created in 1850, in Germany, the first "raw materials associations" precursor to the People's Banks of today. Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen, mayor of Delitzsch (Germany), founded in 1864 the first Raiffeisen credit cooperative in which the ideas of self-help and charity were clearly rooted.

In line with these developments and from a more scientific perspective, the French neoclassical economist Léon Walras (1834-1910) identified Social Economy (SE) as the branch of economic science linked to the social sphere and whose function is to correct pure science. He argued that the association of workers in cooperatives allows them to adapt to the functioning of the market,

with the truly relevant objective being the achievement of a less capitalist and more moral world through the introduction of democracy in the sphere of production rather than distribution. (Valiente, 2021)

With the creation of the German Empire in 1871, the labor and economic protection policies adopted by Otto von Bismarck became an example of state interventionism capable of breaking with much of the classical tradition of 19th-century liberalism, dominated by laissez-faire. Now, a social, or welfare, state, safeguarding social rights, ensured a dignified life for its citizens.

From then on, for almost a century, the term "social economy" fell into disuse. A non-market isomorphism, shaping a Third System, brought such organizations closer to the government that promoted them, forming large national federations. (Soarez, 2014)

This model of a “conservative welfare state,” created by Bismarck in 1883, was followed by the post-World War I states, seeking to disarm socialism by placing it on foreign soil and creating a social security system that guaranteed a fixed income for a considerable number of people, thereby also encouraging them to link their fate to that of the empire. For his part, in the encyclical Rerum Novarum (1891), Leo XIII called, as an act of international cooperation, for the state's actions to be subsidiary to professional associations created as Catholic workers' associations to safeguard the interests of all.

The deflation of 1929 represented a setback for the Liberal State, forcing it to turn to the British economist John Maynard Keynes, who at the time proposed that the means of production remain in the hands of the private sector with democratic regulatory methods to avoid falling into socialism.

After the intervention in social issues necessary to maintain welfare levels, as institutionalized by the new policies, the various forms of the social economy had to remain marginalized, fulfilling their role either as complementary pillars of the welfare regimes (conservative and modern), or as formal (isomorphic) alternative experiences of social change.

After the Second World War and as a consequence of the major economic and

political crises of the period, the right-wing opposition, inspired by Christian values, began to outline a new conception in Germany that proposed the need to impose clear limits on state intervention, seeking instead targeted actions that favored the individual and strengthened the real guarantee of human rights.

This new content, of "conservative, orderly, and controlled liberalism," based on the views of the Freiburg School (ordoliberalism or Rhenish liberalism), reaffirms the value of individual freedom and the value of national communities.

This integration not only gives the country a modern sense of the rule of law (*Rechtsstaat*), which ultimately gives rise to the project of the Christian Democratic Union of Germany, but also, by improving production and increasing productivity, fosters the coordination of the interests of the various sectors of society and achieves the secure recovery of the German postwar economy, as well as its consolidation and expansion in a relatively short time.

Based on Keynes' proposals, three types of "modern Welfare State" regimes were established: the conservative Welfare State, the same one that was applied before the war among the countries of Western Europe; the liberal Welfare State applied in the USA, Canada and Australia, which sought to strengthen all social actors that are part of the market and stop any decommodification initiative; and the Social Democratic or Nordic Welfare State developed throughout the Scandinavian peninsula, merging liberalism and socialism to the maximum political degree.

Furthermore, beginning with the industrialized societies of the time (France, Austria, Italy, and Germany), the need arose to establish a constitutional commitment in all countries to comply with the universal precepts known as the Basic Law of Bonn, of May 23, 1949, or the Social State under the Rule of Law. These precepts refer to the form of political organization aimed at stabilizing democracy and correcting the problems of marginalization caused by the exclusionary dynamics of the market economy and are characterized by respect for human rights.

In the years that followed, under a new economic order, during the period

known as the "*Trente Glorieuses*" (Thirty Glorious Years) (1947-1977), the old post-Keynesian prescriptions were put into practice. That is, by increasing wages, the overall supply of input to businesses increased, prompting them to invest and triggering a new cycle of growth with the replenishment of profits, to everyone's satisfaction. (Borrits, 2015. Cited by Kiintz, 2016)

During the postwar period and until shortly before the 1980s, in the Golden Age of capitalism, the Social Economy movement remained almost nonexistent: exponential economic growth accompanied by full employment in European society and the important role of the Welfare State as the driving force of the system marginalized these types of initiatives.

The original cooperative structures had been reorganized in a pyramidal form, leading to increasing bureaucratization in both independent local cooperatives and those belonging to federations. Above all, by transforming members into users of services, they extinguished any interest in the principles of association and self-management that they had originally embraced.

This was also the case with the aforementioned German seed cooperatives: credit cooperatives, such as the rural cooperatives of *Raiffeisen*, and production cooperatives, such as the industrial cooperatives of *Schulze-Delitzsch*, which expanded between the two occupations established in the armistice agreement.

However, the arrival of the 1970s crisis gradually eroded this widespread social welfare and forced the system to question its economic policies, paving the way for Thatcher's neoliberalism (1978). The economic crisis of the 1970s resembled those of 1868 and 1929, which was attributable to the phenomenon of stagflation, so named for its high inflation and stagnant economic growth coupled with significant rates of structural unemployment.

At the same time, in the last three decades of the 20th century, interest in Social Economy initiatives began to revive, and a period characterized by a surge in studies and practices related to organizations operating under principles of solidarity emerged.

New social needs, primarily related to the living conditions of the elderly, long-

term mass unemployment, immigrants, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, the reintegration of ex-convicts, women's groups, and others, led to a remarkable expansion of these organizations, typically cooperatives and mutual societies, and, above all, associations. (Monzón and Chaves, 2016)

The associative movement that emerged amidst these needs showed a significant increase in the number of these organizations, which received support and support from the State. Following this shift in how social issues were addressed, the poverty associated with the overexploitation of workers in the 19th century began to be replaced by poverty related to exclusion from the world of work.

However, the success achieved by social economy enterprises had diminished the potential of their political mediation. Their initiatives did not seek to eliminate state intervention, but rather to gain recognition in order to obtain the funding offered by pilot projects in the "third sector" focused on innovation and rural development.

In reality, the economic forms adopted by the social economy had not been able to counteract the institutional isomorphism created by its compatibility with the market, resulting from its integration into local networks or its functionality within the welfare state, geared towards service provision.

Certainly, in the social economy approach, social purposes, with their values and objectives, predominate over financial ones, such as sustainability, corporate philanthropy, or concerns for community investment.

However, in some cases, the affiliation of other types of legal entities is authorized, even if they may still place human beings at the center of their motivations. Their activities, compatible with the market and the state, might prioritize efficiency over social responsibility.

How did the solidarity economy emerge?

Once a resurgence of various associative, cooperative, and mutualist initiatives

began to be noticeable in the European context during the last decade of the 20th century, some scholars asserted that the social economy had rediscovered its solidarity dimension.

It encompasses the experiences of the Solidarity Economy, so named by Bernard Eme and Jean Louis Laville (1994), as social actions that civil initiatives, supported by the state, became in an attempt to combat the risk of exclusion for social groups. Some other authors have coined the term "New Social Economy."

Amid the confusion, the direct voices of workers and users sharing in the provision of public services, along with those of welfare state supporters who are beginning to extol the dynamism of civil society, are also beginning to reveal a double standard in economic and political dynamics, shaped by the perceived abandonment of the state. (Laville, 2010)

The European notion of “Solidarity Economy” largely refers to a new way of understanding the economy, characterized by democratized organizational models dedicated to production, distribution, and consumption. These models coexist with private and public sector enterprises, while simultaneously considering them potential points of resistance to capitalist penetration. (Pérez, Etxezarreta, and Guridi, 2009)

In general, up to this point, the solidarity economy is a concept that emerged spontaneously within civil society to respond to the devastating effects of globalization, such as restrictions on freedom of action and social exclusion, while incorporating ecological and feminist motivations stemming from previous alter-globalist movements.

This is a different conception from the Latin American solidarity economy. The Latin American narrative embodies a utopian vision of alter-globalist social movements and a critique of the exploitative and patriarchal relations inherent in the neoliberal capitalist economy.

The Latin American SSE movement is linked to the entry into force of the neoliberal stage of capitalism, better known as globalization, in the early 1990s.

Several factors were decisive for its emergence: cuts to social programs, the privatization of public companies and services, and, above all, the reduction and precariousness of employment.

On the one hand, the cessation of state investment in public services after the dismantling of the welfare state forced private investors to avoid the stagnation of their investments by seeking to evade their territorial commitments and transfer the responsibility for social reproduction to a greater dependence on the market.

On the other hand, the denunciation of the transformation of nature into a mere input for production by rampant capitalism, without regard for the damage caused, ultimately leads to economic, social, and political conflicts. This contributes to providing an empirical basis for questioning capitalist society and its development model, which, when addressed thematically, gives the Alter Globalization Movement a discourse that resonates widely around the world.

At the same time, the academic conceptualization of solidarity economy appears in the work of the Chilean economist Luis Razeto (2007), who, in the 1980s, conceived of solidarity as a fundamental principle present in all phases of the economic cycle of the traditional economy, oriented toward empowering individuals without exploitative purposes.

In his comprehensive economic theory, Razeto (2007) proposes the democratic market as a social construct in which associations, communities, and organizations freely and democratically share their interests and establish demands and conditions for themselves and other social sectors.

From his early work through the Economy and Labor Program (PET) of the Social Pastoral Office of the Chilean Episcopal Conference, titled “Popular Economic Organizations” (1983) and “Popular Solidarity Economy” (1986), he conceived that collective strategies must be developed within the social life of the popular classes—in parishes, neighborhood clubs, and community kitchens —to resolve the immediate problems of sustenance and the satisfaction of people's basic needs.

The main contributions of the Comprehensive Theory of Solidarity Economy can be summarized as “the integration of the concepts of economy and solidarity into a new economic rationality, and the reformulation of the concept of the enterprise and the factors of production.” (Razeto, 1994)

The conditions of vulnerability and hardship faced by the inhabitants of a given territory, or area under study, determine the organizing phenomenon or exogenous cause that induces the productive reorganization of the Community Factor (or Factor C) present in all associations, cooperatives, and other forms of solidarity economy.

The existence of values such as cohesion, camaraderie, responsibility, solidarity, and others, which constitute Factor C, allows the community to share a moral vision for eliminating threats, providing service, and promoting collective interest. (Vélez, 2015)

Resources are all the potentially usable elements and other forces that, when they become part of processes and activities, become factors of production. These are six factors: Material means, Financial means, Technology, Management, Labor, and Factor C.

Material means are the physical elements, facilities, plant and equipment, furniture and fixtures, means of communication and transportation, inventories, materials and supplies, and other goods related to the production process. Financial resources are the means of payment and revolving funds that support the needs of the association or the needs of its members.

Among all the factors of production, one acquires economic status by becoming the organizing factor of productive units and activities.

For example, in a feudal structure, it is the peasants' responsibility to contribute their personal property to form associations or cooperatives to "subsist" while engaged in productive activity for a period of time. In this type of enterprise, the valorization of material resources is the economic objective, as they constitute the organizers of the other factors. (Razeto, 1997)

In inherently pluralistic semi-feudal structures, both material resources and financial resources are the categories that can be compared to Factor C and could assume the role of organizers of economic units, given their power to convene, subordinate, guide, or control the other organizationally categorized factors.

In capitalist enterprises, on the other hand, the financial or means of payment factor is configured as the sole organizing principle of economic units.

In a free market, which is assumed to be democratizing, the conditions of societal backwardness, precarious employment, the exclusion of marginalized populations, subsistence economies based on family and informal labor, the induced association of voluntary work, ancestral economic forms, and the peasant economy, among others, are paths that lead to the motivation for building a solidarity economy.

Once Factor C is developed to some degree, the respective weight of each factor in relation to the share of the social product generated collectively can allow for the identification of the organizing factor. It is precisely this plurality "articulated" to Factor C, inherent in the diverse ways of producing, distributing, consuming, and accumulating with solidarity and in constant feedback of their impacts and products, that allows an organization to be characterized as part of, or the entirety of, a sector of the solidarity economy.

The capitalist market, based on competitive relationships, can no longer be considered the only way in which exchanges take place. Understanding the market in a way that prioritizes solidarity and cooperation can be considered another way of doing economics.

The solidarity economy has the obligation to question the dominant approach that fails to recognize the existence of non-monetary, cultural, and social economic practices within the market itself. This is what Uruguayan sociologist Pablo Guerra was referring to when he received his Master's degree in Social Sciences of Labor from the Labor Economics Program (Santiago, PET) and the *Academia de Humanismo Cristiano* University, 30 years later, in March 2021.

In his work, he categorizes his studies of solidarity-based enterprises, those born out of necessity and those stemming from the convictions of those who practice values alternative to the hegemonic ones, as the "socioeconomics of solidarity." Therefore, alongside structural issues, it also addresses “the theoretical construction of moral and cultural issues.”

Furthermore, it revisits Gramsci’s idea of the market as a construct that is not only democratic but also just where the capacities, values, and power of each individual, actor, and collective come into play, giving rise to countless structures of market behavior. (Guerra, 2013)

In his research on economic experiences within the dense social fabric of working-class neighborhoods and popular sectors, integrated into numerous Popular Economic Organizations (PEOs) and sharing commitments to solidarity values, he succeeded in providing a foundation for the concept of the “solidarity economy,” highlighting the following characteristics:

- They are initiatives that arise in popular environments, both urban and rural.
- They are associative experiences, often family-based, sometimes neighborhood-based or functional.
- As organizations, they aim to achieve specific objectives, from which they create their own strategies.
- These are initiatives that arise to address a range of needs.
- Their distinguishing feature is that they generally satisfy not only individual needs but also social ones.
- They address these needs with their own resources. These are organizations that mobilize the energies of civil society itself. Even so, these experiences are often supported by third-party institutions.
- These initiatives involve relationships and values of solidarity (this would give rise to the concept of a solidarity economy).
- These initiatives aim to be participatory, democratic, self-managed, and autonomous.
- They generally do not limit themselves to a single task but strive to provide comprehensive solutions.
- Finally, these experiences develop an alternative discourse and practice in relation to the dominant system.

For his part, the Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano (2007) defines the popular economy as the expression of the primary relationships that sustain the small heterogeneous units of people who tend to organize themselves socially following a community logic, without an ideological and political self-identification of its agents, nor a revolutionary vision of the world, but rather solidarity in any case would result from necessity, although carrying a conscious cooperative project.

II – THE RATIONALITY OF THE SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY

The SSE as a liberating and emancipatory force

From the perspective of popular politics, both resistance and emancipatory attitudes deserve the utmost respect because the generalization of their rejection or support could provide a criterion for evaluating the idea with which to affirm, reject, or align oneself.

However, in the everyday sphere of social life, resistance to change is taken as a common and ordinary civic position that could favor any of the interacting socioeconomic approaches. This is not the case with the emancipatory attitude, which is adopted in the face of hierarchical policies, whether orthodox or innovative, under the more complex understanding that its rejection or support could generate a multiplying effect of resistance movements.

In terms of formal governance, emancipation is more closely related to local and micro-regional development being part of, or articulated with, the various initiatives for political and social transformation at the national level.

In political philosophy, emancipation is opposed to domination. Therefore, an "emancipated" individual is one who manages to transform personal and collective practices toward favorable conditions that, in everyday life, subordinated and inferiorized them, as a victim of a certain general oppression.

Emancipation here has two meanings: one, to liberate human labor from the constraints of mere material survival, and the other, to share among all the fraction of working time saved by the introduction of new technologies. Also, the emancipation of labor represents the recovery of the pleasure of working, of creating, of generating knowledge to apply to our own transformation and that of the world. (Arruda, 2003)

In the narrative of the European social economy, the concept of emancipation simultaneously shares and antagonizes the concepts of commodification and

protection. In other words, emancipation aims to expose the relations of domination that may be present both in market exchange and in the exercise of social protection. Therefore, at any moment, one might seek to subject one or both spheres to scrutiny in an attempt to defend the autonomy of exchanges or transform the mode of protection.

It could be that liberal currents, such as those encompassed by populist movements against immigrants and the nationally oriented labor movement, support social protection, while others from diverse sources—from environmentalists, alter-globalization movements, feminist and LGBT groups, to indigenous peoples—some more appealing than others, gravitate toward commodification.

In this context, Fraser (2012) proposes a graphical realignment of the economic poles of Polanyi's "double movement" regarding state intervention—stimulus and restraint—so that, by fitting them onto a third vertex representing the concept of emancipation, the interpretation of current global politics is facilitated, in which each of the three tendencies gains its own adherents.

The first vertex of the triangular graph represents the hegemonic environment of commodification, where private companies, driven by profit, transform free goods and services into marketable commodities. The second vertex represents the state-run social protection system. And the third vertex represents emancipation, where the logic of liberation, driven by the oppressed, prevails.

This threefold dimension of these variables in confrontation serves to instrumentalize the strategy to be followed in the face of the capitalist crisis. It is usual that if the failure of state attempts to decipher markets were to incubate political consequences such as the concentration of power in certain economic groups, the predominance of financial technocracy, or the influence of military power, along with the weakening of social protection, then, possibly, the instinct of societies to want to preserve social welfare would be awakened, and this could lead to a call for solidarity mobilization from various alter-globalist positions, and even from the excluded. (Sostres and Farah, 2015)

It is striking how, in several of the struggles of these emancipation movements,

neoliberal critiques of social protection have converged with critiques of the oppressive aspects of social protection. Attempting to explain this, it is observable that social and political agreements of protection could often be considered oppressive because they are hierarchical, whether due to status differences that deny some members the conditions for full participation, or due to gender discrimination that fails to recognize equal conditions in terms of access, parity, or salary allocation when providing services.

Speaking now of liberation, we can also refer to transformation. Semantically, a subject is "liberated" or "liberated" when they manage to leave one situation and enter another without having contradicted the founding elements of the new system that is organized once the previous one has been overcome.

In contrast, the situation is different for the “liberated” subject, so categorized when they become the actor-creator of their own historical process of suppressing the previous structural mechanisms of domination.

In this case, subjects manage to suppress the economic structures that exploit, expropriate, and plunder them, in order to create other forms of production and other systems of exchange and credit. This is precisely what occurs in the struggle and subsequent recovery of autonomy by workers or their communities, or in matters of ecology or solidarity, among others. It is about achieving a liberating transformation.

Finally, it is worth noting the differences that have arisen with the evolution of the concept of innovation. This is mentioned because innovation is also emancipatory, as it allows us to overcome limitations and generate new opportunities.

Traditionally, innovation referred to the incorporation of additional steps in the development of products and services to increase profitability, to satisfy unmet needs, or to solve problems encompassing the entire business model of the organization. Currently, technological innovation focuses on the technological aspects of a product or service, while social innovation aims to identify and address previously overlooked problems, such as poverty, inequality, exclusion, lack of access to education or healthcare, and climate change.

It is widely acknowledged that high levels of inequality and social exclusion undermine social and economic development, while the dissemination of empowering social innovations allows for the sharing of potential benefits achieved through the application of practical and viable solutions with the participation of individuals, communities, and societies.

This is because social innovation enables (or empowers) individuals and organizations by providing them with the tools to adapt, grow, and transform their reality, whether at a personal, social, or economic level. By fostering empowerment, innovation strengthens social capital, community cohesion, and collectively promotes social inclusion. The impact of empowering social innovation lies in the creation of more equitable societies where opportunity for all is an achievable goal. (Haugh and O'Carrol, 2021)

In short, if by liberating economy we mean an economy that rejects the capitalist mode of production, circulation, and credit, then the SSE could be conceived as a liberating economy where the issues to be debated would be: where do we want to go with the transformation, what do we seek to achieve, and how will this transformation be carried out?

According to the SSE's aim to promote a transition to post-development—that is, to implement an alternative proposal to the current state of development—it would be necessary to foster an anti-hegemonic and emancipatory practice capable of opening up the meaning of worldviews, popular knowledge, and other alternative social and economic practices, in order to make it possible to re-integrate the economy with other spheres of life before improving the living conditions of all those who have been affected.

Popular Economy vs. Labor Economy

The 1980s were marked by structural adjustment policies and external debt repayment, as well as by neoliberal programs of corporatization and state governance that provoked the so-called "political cycle of protest," characterized by new forms of social, political, and violent struggles that posed

significant challenges to the governance of the newly established democracies. (Hynes, 2020)

The available theories on informal or self-employed workers were critical. On the one hand, they addressed how capitalism functioned in the periphery, and on the other hand, the ILO characterized the phenomenon as stemming from excessive state regulation that hindered the development of transformative productive forces in society through its intervention in the economy.

There is a very important relationship between the work of José Luis Coraggio and Orlando Núñez Soto in the context of the Nicaraguan revolution. Both authors served as political officials in the Sandinista revolution, the first as director of the Institute of Agrarian Reform and the second as an advisor to the Ministry of Agrarian Reform. (Serra, 2018)

In the work of the Nicaraguan economist Núñez (1987), the main social subject of the insurrection was the impoverished masses from those uprooted sectors of the countryside and the city, proletarianized in their origins, but later collectively abandoned in the urban periphery and without a fully defined class position.

This author conceives that without the sponsoring intervention of the State, the social construction of markets would not be possible, nor would the conditions of ownership, availability, and use of resources have required by multi-activity labor projects seeking the inclusion of marginalized rural and urban households. (Diaz and Núñez, 2012)

Furthermore, the influence of the theories of dependent underdevelopment championed by structuralists Raúl Prebisch (1963), Aníbal Pinto (1965), and Oswaldo Sunkel (1978) is notable. These theories summarize informality, poverty, and exclusion as inherent to the productive and survival activities of Latin American popular sectors.

Economic theory typically characterizes this phenomenon both by the confluence of technological backwardness, low-income levels, low labor productivity, and the lack of official registration of activities, and by its role as a

"refuge" in the face of the lack of job creation by the modern or formal sector of the economy.

The Argentine economist Coraggio (1989) published the text “Economic Policy, Communication, and the Popular Economy,” in which he outlined the tension between the concepts of informality and the public policy recommendations promoted by multilateral organizations such as the ILO, IMF, and World Bank during the height of neoliberalism. (Serra, 2018)

At the São Paulo Forum held in Lima, Peru (1992), Coraggio presented the paper “From the Informal Sector to the Popular Economy,” in which he explained this transition based on the activities of the self-employed worker, encompassing activities that follow a rationale oriented toward generating resources that provide means of subsistence based on the aggregation of labor units rather than capital.

This perspective is the indirect product of two socioeconomic conditions:

1) The unequal development generated by the relations of production between the earlier industrialized core capitalist countries and the peripheral countries that specialize in the extraction of natural resources, and
2) The deprivation of means of production and wage labor.

The defining characteristic of the informal economy is its commercial and financial subordination to the traditional capitalist economy. On the one hand, under the commercial lens, informal work reveals a devaluation that suggests the distribution of inferior goods. On the other hand, under the financial lens, informal workers appear insolvent because they lack real collateral and therefore must face usurious interest rates.

Other investment sectors view the informal economy as a resource for capital to reduce costs and compete in the international market by equating informal activities with hidden wages paid by large corporations.

The term "Economy of Labor" as adopted by Coraggio to refer to the work that ensures the expanded reproduction of life in community, is defined as being

made up of those workers whose survival depends on the realization of their labor capacities, which can take three forms:

1) Internal labor, as work for the production of goods for domestic consumption.
2) External labor, as market labor, whether in the form of self-employment, individually or collectively, to produce goods and services to be sold in the market.
3) Wage labor, sold as labor power to capitalist enterprises, the public sector, or other organizations or households.

Thus, the economy, interpreted through the lens of labor economy, establishes a distinction between those activities that can be satisfied through market demand and those that involve various types of reciprocity, guaranteeing not only a minimum standard of living but also the reproduction of life for all. These needs can be met through directly social forms of labor or with public resources, striving for more egalitarian and democratic societies.

Solidarity as a value sustained by cooperation and in mutual aid, it would be difficult to even attempt to promote a grassroots social policy, built by and for those displaced by neoliberalism and managed by their organizations.

It is therefore the responsibility of neoliberal organizations to construct a social policy to address the needs of those displaced by their own actions.

From these perspectives, a distinction begins to be made between the working class, as defined by Marxism, and the "popular classes," referring to those socially excluded groups commonly known as "the poor."

Razeto (1993), in his book "From Popular Economy to the Solidarity Economy in an Alternative Development Project," abandons the term Popular Economy, preferring Solidarity Economy. (Serra, 2018).

For his part, Núñez (1995), in his book "The Associative and Self-Managed Popular Economy," theorizes that, in the wake of exclusion from wage employment caused by capitalism, among the subjects of the popular economy, first, involves the experience of self-management (family-based or in small,

simple commodity production ventures). Then, in addition to "taking refuge" in commodity production, they pursue an "associative and self-managed strategy" around that production, as a project of emancipation.

...Once the path to association is opened, the principle of self-management would be implemented in all aspects of social life, including the management of the State itself. Thus, Núñez argues that a Labor Economy, intended to underpin the sphere of the popular economy, fails to address the specific needs of the Self-Employed.

...It is the expansion of associative and self-managed work that would be implemented in all aspects of social life, including the management of the State itself, which can be considered a strategy of resistance and, at the same time, of political construction of the alternative project.

...Along this path of association to develop self-managed commodity work programs, non-reimbursable resources continue to strengthen the Marketing instances and their value chain, and the establishment of technical assistance and training agreements, make it possible to promote and sustain a horizontal and dynamic subsystem that reflects the relationship between social actors, economic actors and the State. (Mitre, 2023)

Coraggio's idea of how economics is conducted in Latin America coincided with the conceptualization known as "solidarity-based popular economy," whose socioeconomic practices of production, distribution, circulation, and consumption of goods and services occur through the resolution of needs, seeking sustainability and the expanded reproduction of life for all participants, without exploitation of others' labor, while establishing social, fraternal, and solidarity-based bonds, with responsibility for the management of natural resources and respect for future generations.

Coraggio (1998) understands Popular Economy as the economic activities, resources, networks, rules, knowledge, and values of individuals, households, and associated groups as productive units or units of consumption and production, or households that depend on the uninterrupted realization of their labor for the reproduction of their lives.

The household constitutes a group of people with some degree of kinship whose collective labor capacities are exercised by the able-bodied members of said unit under normal conditions to resolve, in a spirit of solidarity, the expanded reproduction of life. the lives of all its members.

Considering the domestic sphere, where family and individual self-management agreements might take precedence over associative ones, blurs the lines between multiple jobs, and in some cases, these discrepancies can generate a lack of trust among participants.

In the Popular Economy, individuals and households maintain relationships of solidarity and reciprocal arrangements of some kind, in which receiving obliges one to reciprocate in some way to the giver, or to the group to which the giver belongs, or to some other member of the community, regulated by rules, uses, and customs.

Within households, relationships are imposed by moral guidelines for behavior, primarily determined by historical and cultural factors.

According to Coraggio (1999), the various members of the household, in their diverse forms, develop their individual work base—that is, the sum of their own abilities and not an endowment of monetary capital—in a coordinated and variable manner throughout their life cycle. Thus, the household unit seeks the best possible use of the resulting collective working capital, aiming to achieve the solidarity-based reproduction of the lives of all its members.

The Popular Economy includes all household units that do not live off the exploitation of others' labor, nor can they live off accumulated wealth, but whose members must continue working to meet average expectations of quality of life, forming an aggregate of diverse behaviors: some closer to market logic and others to solidarity principles, governed by the biological and social reproduction of its members.

By excluding the popular economy from all types of employer-employee relationships and positioning labor as the main factor of production, its

approach is restricted to capitalist market rationality, leaving the consideration of these ventures outside the reductionist logics of the scientific organization of work.

Furthermore, by having to assimilate gender relations in the analysis of sustainability, due to the sexual division between unpaid care work and work for the production of goods and services, when transferring the lower costs involved to the private sector, one would be Recognizing and enabling the analysis of sustainability in pluralistic terms.

Among the debates that arose in the search for a definition of the Popular Economy were the intellectual currents of Latin American social thought from the second half of the 20th century, known as Latin American Liberationism, and also the strong participation of active members of the Catholic Church adhering to Liberation Theology, and of important Reformed and Pentecostal groups, among others.

In the Philosophy of Liberation (Dussel, 1977), the subject of change views capitalism as a historical form of exploitation linked to European colonial expansion, not reducible solely to the contradiction between capital and social labor, nor exclusively tied to class position. Therefore, it becomes possible to distinguish other modes of production that articulate contradictions within the specific characteristics of Latin America.

In this Latin American liberationist context, such an examination of alternative existence (or of the other) in the periphery of the world is called "Dusselian analectics," understood as the reality of the figure of the other in the place where the history, word, body, and culture of the other—which is of interest—are to be considered.

In other words, analectics is a philosophical current that seeks to reflect on Latin American reality and its relationship to colonial history and capitalism. It is also an exercise in reason, a transformative power, that proposes thinking about the future from the perspective of alterity, between difference and the recognition of the "other" as a subject with their own history and experience.

The Analectic current is the one that exerts its influence in the case of the Sandinista Revolution and its intellectual context. Starting from Emmanuel Levinas's (1906-1995) critique of Western philosophy, centered on metaphysics and anthropology of alterity in which an idea of the other as external is constructed, they construct an exteriority in which both terms "us" are reducible to one another, in an analectic process of exchange between equals.

At that time, the direct referent of the popular was represented by the subject of the Sandinista revolution. In this way, the proletariat as the privileged subject or sole agent of history is displaced from the center of the discussion, shifting the focus toward a subject of liberation from a more encompassing position than the proletarian condition.

The “subject of the revolution” and the constructs of “the people” and of the constructed “subject of liberation” emerged as distinct from and transcending the construct of “social class,” both in its internal category of negativity (the inability of the oppressed and exploited to live) and in its external materiality (the political space of victims such as the poor and the excluded).

The center of the debate revolved around the reinterpretation of the subject as agent of social change, broader than the proletariat, which could include all those affected by neoliberalism, such as displaced peasants, the self-employed, the urban poor, the excluded and marginalized, and workers, including the external perspective proposed by the philosophy of liberation.

This position advocates for the construction of a political project of Popular Economy, based on a multi-class subject born from the exclusion resulting from neoliberal adjustment, including the informal sector, without distinguishing between owners and non-owners of the means of production. These individuals may have different ways of orienting their activity toward satisfying the needs of their immediate associated group, though never toward the reproduction of capital.

Coraggio, in his presentation at the 1999 Seminar on “the economy of popular sectors: between reality and utopia” at the Catholic University of Salvador (UCSAL), which arose from the initiative of a group of NGOs linked to the

Brazilian Catholic Church and social economy organizations, uses the term "Economy of Labor" in the text "From a Popular Economy to an Economy of Labor" (published in 2001) within a logic clearly opposed to that of capital. He uses this logic to explain the pursuit of expanded reproduction, starting from one or more people linked by diverse relationships of affinity, until it encompasses the reproduction of the entire working class.

This event is significant because it brought together, for the first time, the three main schools of thought on the SSE, represented by Marcos Arruda, Paul Singer, and Luis Inacio Gaiger (Lechat, 2002), as well as theorists such as Gabriel Kraychette, coordinator of Popular Economy at UCSAL, and Paul Singer, who would later become Secretary of Solidarity Economy under the ruling of the Brazilian *Partido Trabalhista*.

Coraggio begins by criticizing the Nicaraguan left for its attempt to pit the working class against informality, or small and micro self-employment, which is also linked to the production of market-oriented goods and services. He accuses them of denying the proletariat the capacity to constitute itself as a political subject, thus preventing it from becoming a socioeconomic class.

It argues that the difficulties faced by workers amidst the transformations of the Latin American labor market are what determine which sectors of the population are excluded and become dependent on activities that underpin the reproduction of life.

Furthermore, when reflecting on the economic relationships established by labor, consumption, and the market, the notion of the precariat enters the discussion. This concept was popularized by the Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (2005) when referring to one of the effects of liquid modernity: the creation of a new class that, due to its living conditions, limited well-being, and lack of security, can be called the working class. (Neira, 2021)

Under these conditions, Coraggio argues, there is "a need to rethink our relationship with capital outside the market economy in order to prioritize human beings over the vast inequalities generated by capital. To reimagine rural territories as transformative spaces, we must abandon the view of land as a

commodity and of human beings as unlimited consumers." (Tomatis, 2014)

When labor is contracted to perform certain tasks, even if there is a climate of cooperation, but under a relationship of dependence and authority of an employer, then those workers cannot be referred to as associated workers.

According to Fisher and Tiriba (2009), "cooperative labor is being established within the very context of capitalist social formation and needs to conquer its space as an alternative for the working class to liberate itself from the various forms of alienated labor. Those involved in cooperative labor experiences are shown to be undergoing a process of struggle for the legitimacy and social validation of this form of production."

For Coraggio (2009), not all forms of the popular economy are SSEE, although all SSE are part of the popular economy. Regardless, SSEE will produce goods and services for the market, for self-consumption, or for third parties without market mediation, whether through monetary or non-monetary means, but essentially under forms of collective and participatory ownership, organization, and management.

For these enterprises to operate, part of their production, marketing, or financing must be part of marketing collectives, community microcredit systems, or supply chains among similar organizations, in which profits, losses, and capital investments are shared among all participating enterprises. in a way that promotes the transfer of resources from those with better financial results to those in worse conditions.

SSE is positioned in a manageable space between the productive and domestic reproductive spheres, which raises the need to recognize the integration of productive and reproductive functions as a particular economic circuit within the labor market. Viewed more broadly, it can be said that it refers to an alternative system with different values where it is possible to return to work for people and for the planet and to recognize a diverse set of activities committed to living well.

Several conditions entail a promise of controlled reciprocal aid based on

solidarity, such as: the idea of domestic production exercising self-management in which there is no boss or employees, the perspective of businesses owned by the self-employed, worker cooperatives, and micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises in which all workers are also owners of the means of production.

This new way of producing work and social life could not be understood as tied to wage labor and capitalist culture as it should be. While self-employed individuals are not dependent and, in a way, "self-manage," they cannot be considered self-managed workers because they are not associated with others. Both "self-management" and "association" are essential for the economic forms of the Popular Economy to be part of the SSE. (Vázquez, 2010)

In contrast, he argues that the socioeconomic structures within which the SSE could successfully operate are not merely technical nor subject to instrumental rationality, but rather acquire meaning according to their values, relationships, senses, and culture, which support a subjectivity.

A subjectivity in which some agents, unintentionally, may be reproducing the structures within which they operate, while others, as actors, are constructing variations of the institutions and economic formats of the SSE.

It is at the heart of this same subjectivity that the viability of demarcating a collective and potentially democratic subject emerges, one that possesses a high degree of awareness regarding the deterministic scope and degrees of freedom of socioeconomic structures, coupled with its capacity to devise strategies and weigh structural alternatives to achieve them." (Coraggio, 2013)

While these definitions arose from the reflections of multi-class currents involved in the struggle that, from 1979, brought the FSLN to power until its loss in the 1990 elections to the National Opposition Union, they are ultimately attributable to these two authors who jointly developed their concepts based on the categories of critical theory.

In terms of consensus, self-managed popular enterprises can be grouped under the heading of "social economy initiatives, labor economy initiatives, and second-generation popular economy initiatives," in which, in the latter, men and

women affected by unemployment and precarious work deploy value creation and development strategies. exchange to achieve their expectations of quality of life.

“In order to move towards these types of practices, communities must achieve processes of autonomy in decision-making, which will allow them to propose and develop forms of organization and social power, and advance towards processes of socio-economic empowerment.” (Landriscini, 2013)

Consequently, the future of the solidarity economy depends on reclaiming itself by establishing a new organization of work, through the development of collective institutions capable of counteracting its hierarchically subordinate position to capitalist power.

Given the evident predominance of competition under capitalism, discussions arose regarding the occurrence of a capitalist colonization of the labor economy, which, in addition to reducing the value of wages, ends up reproducing the labor force required for the commercial consumption of capital.

It is also clear that the limitations of the SSE in building its “alternative” to capitalism are not only inherently opposed by the internal and structural problems of the proposal but also by the “Functionalities” resulting from the neoliberal colonization of certain postulates of the SSE, which, in attempting to neutralize the reduction in the value of wages, end up reproducing the labor force required for the commodity consumption of capital.

These final arguments left the audience without answers to the question: is the SSE a functional resource of capitalism or could it be an emancipatory force from it?

What had never been the subject of any discussion, precisely because they are part of the foundations of the Popular Economy, were:

- First, the commitment to the capacity of the oppressed themselves to generate change, a matter in which the revolutionary subject of *Sandinismo* served as a model for thinking about this political-economic

alternative.

- Second, the socioeconomic problem to be solved is not a special case to be resolved through development alternatives, but rather a structural problem of the functioning of capitalism, in which the transition from the traditional marginal working class to the modern working class, based on the development of the productive forces, exceeded the needs of capitalist accumulation and gave rise to a third category that was neither entirely proletarian nor entirely peasant, a result of new forms of accumulation and urbanism.

The Impact of Liberation Theology in Latin America

Liberation Theology in Latin America (LTLA) solemnly affirms its preference for those who suffer unjust treatment at the hands of oppressive systems and offers them two options for development: "developmentalism" in service of the social status quo, and "liberation" as the only possible way to overcome the structural causes of underdevelopment. (Chaouch, 2007)

Liberation was conceived as an "integral liberation," that is, always recognizing the other, whether "the poor, the erotically dominated woman, the discriminated race, youth, or the people, culturally and pedagogically violated…". (Dussel, 2007)

Fundamentally, the Christian spiritual movement is the social expression of the biblical theological principle that states: "all people, regardless of their wealth, gender, race, and culture, are loved by God." (Galatians 3:28).

The problem is how to deliver universal love in an unequal and unjust world. Perhaps, in the world of ideas, it is possible to find a way to love everyone without clashing with other logics and unjust situations, but in the real world, contradictions are inevitable. The key point regarding theologies is not their doctrinal or theological content, but their cynical perspective, their forgetfulness of "hunger." The Latin American Liberation Theology (TLLA) embraced the preferential option for the poor and the victims.

Juan Luis Segundo (1978), an important 20th-century Latin American theologian, emphasized that:

"…no theology of liberation could exist without freeing theology from its ties, whether conscious or unconscious, to the societies of the status quo…without making the political option for change toward liberation an intrinsic and de-ideologizing element of faith."

In other words, we would only have authentic faith when we commit ourselves to a genuine struggle that opens our eyes to new possibilities and meanings of the Word of God.

"If the historical dependence and domination of two-thirds of humanity, with its 30 million annual deaths from hunger and malnutrition, does not become the starting point of any Christian theology today, even in rich and dominant countries, then theology will be incapable of historically situating and grounding its fundamental themes."

Its questions will not be real questions. They will distance themselves from real humanity. Therefore, […] it is necessary to save theology from its own cynicism. Because in the face of current global problems, many theological writings are reduced to cynicism." (Assmann, 1971)

The Korean-Brazilian theologian Jung Mo Sung (2025) states:

"The climate in which poverty is described is one of indignation; that is, indignation at the cynicism of theologies that disregard the hunger experienced by two-thirds of the world's population, indignation at the cynicism of scientism in proclaiming ethical neutrality in the face of a social reality of oppression, indignation at the cynicism of those citizens who protest when the State uses tax revenue to develop welfare programs for the poor…"

"It is precisely the interpretation of life with the help of the Bible, focusing on the struggles of the poor and oppressed, that has enabled ecumenical dialogue and cooperation with other religious communities, and has led to a new concept of revelation in which the 'people' and the 'poor' are the true 'subjects' of

theology."

"Now, in all Latin American Christian hermeneutics, the "poor," conscious and inspired by their religious faith, are seen as the agents of their own liberation."

In general, the texts of the Latin American Liberation Theology (TLLA) emphasize the "preferential option for the poor," the work to be done with grassroots and community organizations, and the necessary political struggle, although its position within the context of social and political violence was more ambivalent than is often thought. Faced with military dictatorships and increased repression in the region, it preferred to distance itself from its initial revolutionary ideals, though without abandoning its radical ethic of social transformation. (Chaouch, 2007)

While the TLLA defended an "alternative" ecclesial model based on lay participation and the valuing of local communities, it did not truly become a theology of the laity.

Its supporters included cross-cutting sectors of the Catholic Church, and the clergy predominated among the theologians, such that the nascent opposition remained dependent on the institution. The "converted" bishops represented a prophetic model that should be followed, and their authority reinforced.

The militant and intellectual sphere of the TLLA extended beyond the Catholic and religious context, while still being regulated by it, and its religious dynamics sometimes contradicted its secularizing aspects. The tensions between its religious dimension, due to its proximity to ecclesiastical power, and its intellectual dimension, due to its distance from the pastoral sphere, must be mentioned.

Its network dimension necessitated paying more attention to its transcontinental trajectories between Europe, North America, and Latin America than to its embodiment as a "Latin American Church."

Its intellectual and international dynamics transcended the territorial references constructed by an ideological discourse, remaining distant from those at the

bottom of the social ladder and dedicating themselves to more concrete projects of social development and the defense of human rights, even though the actors often claimed the greater authenticity of their commitment to liberation.

Fundamentally, Liberation Theology did not break with its historical matrix within contemporary Catholicism. The very strategy of liberation theology was ambiguous: one of subtle opposition to and relative conciliation with ecclesiastical power, in which attitudes of disobedience and submission coexisted, sometimes simultaneously.

In its subtle opposition, it adopted characteristics of that matrix, both in the ideological realm of its communitarian and religious ideals, and in its relationship with established ecclesiastical power.

This compels us to ask whether the Latin American Liberation Theology (TLLA) was simply "progressive," or whether it was a byproduct of that conservative Catholicism, always divided between its initial rejection of modernity and its successive adaptations to it.

Regarding this second type of theology within the Christian world, there is a danger of denying the real, embodied human being in favor of an abstract vision and reducing the Church's mission to the salvation of the soul.

Furthermore, the human beings who must be "cared for" in these theological discussions are probably not the poor or other social groups who are victims of injustice, but rather those who are well integrated into society. (Sung, 2025)

On an ideological level, and without any analysis of the actors and social processes involved, the Christian originality of the concept of liberation is the same perspective as a properly Latin American socialism.

However, what the Latin American Theological Theory (TLLA) has truly contributed is its definition of the starting point of the threat of death to the poor and victims, which generates their exclusion from the market, and, additionally, a methodology for the struggle to defend the right to a dignified life for poor people and victims of the system, products of unjust social relations.

The theologian and economist Franz Hinkelammert was a renowned Latin American thinker, known for his critique of development ideologies and his focus on life as the fundamental value. In general, his work includes a critique of utopian reason based on the logic of capital, and proposes an alternative utopia that places life at the center of the economy and society.

Specifically, he proposes a theological-economic method that transcends the theological-ideological process that generates and justifies the death of the poor —that is, the process of fetishization applicable in the capitalist economy.

The book "The Idolatry of the Market" reveals the intertwining of economics and theology, as well as the real and concrete struggle for life: within economic theories and processes, there is a strange metamorphosis of, and a fierce struggle among, the gods.

In other words, the theory of fetishism is dedicated to studying the conditions of possibility regarding the freedom, life, and death of the poor, seeking to highlight the invisible social process that defines who can lead a good life and who will die prematurely. (Assmann and Hinkelammert, 1989)

In another book, "An Economy for Life" (2006), Hinkelammert and Mora point out that economics must address the conditions that make life possible, starting from the premise that human beings are natural, embodied, and needy beings.

Their specific anthropocentrism begins with the human being as a needy, embodied, and living subject, and does not see the environment as an end in itself but as the essential material mediation for the production of embodied human life, with human life being the ultimate condition for the reproduction of nature, the ultimate instance of all rationality.

Specifically, it addresses the issue of reproducing the material, biophysical, or socio-institutional conditions that make life possible and sustainable, based on the satisfaction of everyone's needs and enjoyment, and therefore, on access to the use values that make this satisfaction and enjoyment real, that make a full life possible for everyone.

This concrete anthropocentrism rests on the idea that the reproduction of nature is the condition, end, and means of the reproduction of human life. Therefore, from the very need to reproduce material human life arises the need to ensure the reproduction of nature.

Here, the human life project is not a specific project in itself, but rather the ultimate material condition that enables the preservation and reproduction of life. Only insofar as nature, as the counterpart to human labor and the material mediation of which human beings are a part, also becomes part of the human project, does it, or have, a project.

The living, embodied, and concrete subject is also not individual. "The subject It is the other (…) The individual, on the other hand, is the objectified relationship with the other, mediated by exchange and the market" (Hinkelammert, 1998). This idea implies the necessary solidarity inherent in every society and particularly in this sense of Economy.

The "human being/natural environment" relationship is also a natural relationship, but one that simultaneously establishes a social relationship. And, since humankind is a natural being, that is, an integral part of Nature, it cannot place itself above natural laws.

The destruction of nature, ecocide, is also suicide. Therefore, the idea of solidarity, necessary to sustain an Economy for Human Life, extends both to the (human) subject and to the (external) nature that contains it and is the source of its fundamental reproductive cycle.

For his part, the Brazilian economist and educator Marcos Arruda (2004) conceives of the economy as the "management of the household," which must be at the service of the well-being of each and every inhabitant. in it.

This organization implies: sharing ownership and management of productive assets, as well as equitably sharing tasks and responsibilities among the people and communities who work, decentralizing power and knowledge, along with wealth, overcoming all exploitation and domination of some over others—that

is, emancipating labor. (Arruda, 2003)

The subjective basis capable of animating a responsible, pluralistic, and solidarity-based economy is the struggle for personal and interpersonal transformation, the construction of another subjectivity that transcends the patriarchal and egocentric culture by promoting an ecocentric and matriarchal consciousness—that is, non-hierarchical, non-authoritarian, and emotionally welcoming of the other as an authentic other in diversity.

“Once the current patriarchal and authoritarian vertical logic is discarded, the solidarity economy will continue through change within each company, enabling a horizontal relationship between people, between workers, where the main value is not capital but cooperation and solidarity.

It describes the solidarity economy as an ethical, reciprocal, and cooperative way of consuming, financing, exchanging, communicating, educating, and developing, fostering a new way of thinking and living.

It sees it as “an organized economic activity for secure and sustainable individual and collective self-development, which involves the shared satisfaction of needs and desires and the co-management of the common goods of individuals, households, communities, districts, counties, ecosystems, countries, and the planet.”

It considers that “the greatest weakness of the Solidarity Economy is the lack of a culture of democratic and participatory economic management, and above all, the expanded reproduction of life, that is, the well-being of every human being in dignified, sustainable, and high-quality conditions. It fails to make the opportunities and advantages of cooperativism and the Solidarity Economy visible through best practices, aiming to expand the movement's reach.”

“Another form of globalization is possible, but to achieve it, we must begin by transforming the economy. This will encompass all forms of work and their fair remuneration, including domestic work and equitable distribution of the benefits of productivity. Public funds created from the surplus of social labor will be managed through participatory processes to serve the agreed-upon

development goals." (Arruda, 2010)

"The movement needs to collaborate with other social movements, broadening its agenda to integrate cross-cutting issues such as: a culture of peace, the struggle for social equality for all genders and ethnicities, the defense of the natural environment, love for the Earth, denunciation of the neoliberal regime, the struggle for the sovereignty of peoples and respect for diversity, new multilateral institutions at the service of the people, and a new progressive tax system, both nationally and internationally, among others."

The Devastating Events of Liberation Theology

The first systematic and public criticism of Liberation Theology did not come from the Vatican hierarchy, but from the American political sphere.

According to Ismael Braun (2025), the Rockefeller Report, drafted after Vice President Richard Nixon's 1969 tour of Latin America, warned that the Catholic Church was ceasing to be a reliable guarantor of order and social stability, and was beginning to constitute itself as a potentially destabilizing actor. The document suggested countering its influence by strengthening evangelical churches and Protestant denominations more aligned with Washington's geostrategic interests.

Along the same lines, the Santa Fe Documents, drafted in May 1980 by a group of advisors close to the future Reagan administration, proposed a return to the Monroe Doctrine and recommended "combating Liberation Theology by all means," as well as exercising control over the media in order to reverse the negative perception of the United States in Latin America. The emerging theology was accused of instrumentalizing Christianity as an ideological weapon against private property and the capitalist system.

Braun (2025) states that "…in accordance with these guidelines, the Institute for Democracy and Religion was founded in April 1981, with the purpose of consolidating the presence of evangelical churches funded to disseminate a religious discourse aligned with free-market values and anti-communism.

Simultaneously, financial support was offered to conservative Catholic prelates, such as Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo in Nicaragua, thus shaping a continental strategy of theological and pastoral containment."

Finally, under the pontificate of John Paul II, the Holy See entrusted the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith with a doctrinal review of the Liberation Theology of America (LTLA). This process resulted in the instructions:

Libertatis Nuntius (1984) points out certain theological approaches subordinated to sociopolitical categories that reduce the Christian faith, without explicitly criticizing the preferential option for the poor.

For its part, *Libertatis Conscientia*, (1986) in line with the encyclical Sollicitudo rei socialis (1987), proposes a comprehensive conception of human freedom that transcends the economic sphere and is grounded in human development, including its spiritual, cultural, and moral dimensions. It is within this framework that the Church's emphasis shifted from social justice to the principle of solidarity, adopting a less confrontational tone toward existing socioeconomic structures. (Braun, 2025)

Although these texts do not constitute a complete condemnation of the LTLA, they express profound reservations, especially regarding the use of Marxist analysis as a hermeneutical tool for interpreting social reality. While these guidelines did not mandate the definitive suppression of the Latin American Liberation Theology (TLLA), they did manage to limit its expansion and influence within the Church. Many of its leading figures were subjected to censorship, displacement, or silencing.

Between 1964 and 1985, more than one hundred religious men and women associated with communities committed to this movement were murdered, creating a silent martyrdom. The drama continued in subsequent decades, as evidenced by the murder of six Jesuits at the Central American University (UCA) of El Salvador in 1989, an episode that symbolizes the persistent violence against those who opted for a Church embodied in the cry of the poor.

III – FORMS OF THE SSE INCORPORATED INTO A MIXED ECONOMY

The plurality induced by the new economic formats of the SSE

The plurality of an economy is the manifestation of the extent to which the diversity of its elements gives rise to a structure with the determining function of creating unity and stability as a society, and of being capable, at some point, of modifying its own current state.

The first notion of plurality stems from the different forms of ownership and the economic sense embedded in the management and practice of the actions of the State, the market, and intra-society relations.

A second plurality encompasses Karl Polanyi's (1944) approach, which assigns principles and institutionalized forms to redistribution by the State, material exchange represented by the market, and reciprocity shaped by social economy initiatives.

These intersections of such plural elements, reflecting mixed economic forms in joint and individual motion, imply the deployment of econometric conceptual and methodological questions seeking a weighting of the social product. (González, 2021)

In terms of national economic exchanges, it is common to refer to a plurality articulated by economic segments distinguishable according to the dynamics of the resources used, such as market (buying and selling of goods and services), non-market (subsidies and donations), and non-monetary (volunteering and communitarianism).

Consequently, this tripolar configuration, according to its focused historical

articulation, determines a specific functioning of the economic and social system where these economic subsystems coexist simultaneously, each with its dominant logics.

Any modification of the control achieved by any of the components of this plurality generates a different relationship of interdependence among its elements, the degree or transformative scope of which on the whole our economic order is known as transplurality.

The very daily struggle for survival of large, marginalized, and excluded social masses, temporarily and reconfigured throughout the capitalist world, is a recurring example of the existence of a diversity of economic rationalities capable of guaranteeing people's lives.

Specifically, Polanyi's substantive economics, which emphasizes humanity's dependence on its environment and on others, defines economic processes as non-natural, that is, as resulting from social and political constructs that can modify the pluralistic nature of the economy.

This view of economic activity as part of life in society affirms the existence of a plurality of economic principles and forms. This is not the case under the neoclassical view of economics, where the dominance of the absolutization of the market as a self-regulating institution, combined with the logic of the relationship between means (resources) and ends (profits), leads to a perception of invalidity and invisibility of other economic logics and business models, mostly ancestral and popular.

In this way, Razeto (1997) can articulate the "community" factor (factor C) among the diverse forms of producing, distributing, consuming, and accumulating with solidarity, characteristic of the different experiences of the SSE, thus typifying another type of plurality.

For his part, Coraggio (1999) examines the Latin American economy as being constituted by three mutually interdependent, partially overlapping, and fully interpenetrating components:

- The capitalist business economy, organized based on private companies, oriented by the unlimited accumulation of capital.
- The public economy, organized around territorial or functional legal-administrative units, oriented by a variable combination of three objectives: the common good, governance, and the accumulation of political power.
- The popular economy, organized based on households or their extensions, oriented by the expanded reproduction of the lives of its members.

In the development of Latin American economic thought, the popular economy constitutes an existing social and solidarity-based economic reality that refers to the "complexity of the practices and dynamics of social and economic actors, collectively organized under models of self-management."

The sustainability of the plurality inherent in the diverse internal economic formats of the popular economy depends on the participation of its actors and their organizational structures, with their levels and principles that utilize their individual and collective labor in cooperation and reciprocity to address the problems of life, subsistence, and survival, and satisfy their individual and collective needs.

"The ancestral solidarity-based popular economy proposes, as a strategy, maximizing the solidarity factor to achieve the satisfaction of basic needs and cumulatively generate development processes through which society could aspire to organize and revolutionize the informal economy." (Chena, 2018)

More recently, the fact that the new Bolivian Political Constitution (2009) incorporates the definition of the economy in constitutional terms, as well as the incorporation of the four types of economic rationality—namely, community, state, private, and social cooperative—corresponding to the specific historical movement of the country's social formation, is presented as a novelty.

In the communitarian specificity of the Bolivian Political Constitution, the State is the promoter of the plural economy through the redistribution of wealth generated in strategic sectors that generate surpluses (mining, energy, and

environmental resources) in favor of sectors that generate income and employment (manufacturing, tourism, and agricultural development). (Vacaflorez, 2017)

Regarding the market, SSEE have difficulty competing on equal footing with capitalist companies because they cannot produce at low cost or achieve the efficiency required to innovate and reach the market more quickly. Specifically, the structure available to small and emerging businesses for the exchange of goods consists of a complex web of relationships that constitutes their social, institutional, and discursive space in the form of integrated networks of social capital, designed to enhance resources and capabilities to respond to the needs and general well-being of the community.

The first potential competitive advantage that suits emerging and small-scale businesses is that of a value chain primarily focused on identifying the efficiency of transactions within an essentially linear chain.

These vertical integration projects, which include diverse supply commitments to purchasing companies, such as technical assistance, training, technology transfer, and financial support, among others, have significant implications given the trend toward greater integration of local resources into global value chains. This situation necessitates bridging links with other chains, whether related to territorial development, SMEs, or others, helping to stimulate local synergies. (Gómez, Salcedo, and Urquía, 2013)

The second possible competitive advantage strategy is that of agglomeration projects (clusters), which typically involve, in addition to the actors in the value chain, any other entity with the potential to influence the cluster, such as academia, research institutes, government, and private business organizations.

Cluster approaches are systematizing, have a strategic orientation, include the analysis of the value chains that comprise them, and focus on resolving coordination and information gaps through greater institutional participation.

Empirical experience indicates that, in areas with high production concentration, the integration of both value chain and cluster initiatives

(Product-Systems) offers the opportunity to achieve greater efficiency in resource allocation.

However, both, alone or in combination, require having been introduced as part of companies' competitive strategies, which explains why many companies only benefit potentially.

In this way, the community's organizational capacity to project its development based on the exploitation of existing resources within its own territories is being refined.

Nevertheless, despite their diverse historical trajectories and socioeconomic structures, SSEE still face difficulties in finding their own path as a dynamic social, cultural, and economic force that integrates parishes, communes, and rural communities through a political process linked to a collective life project.

Entrepreneurship in the popular economy

In Indigenous culture, community is the condition for fulfilling life, since, above all, human beings live with others in necessary mutual relationships within the community organization.

There is a harmonious bridge, without contradictions, between the "we" and the "I", between the individual and their interests and the interests of the collective, where there is a real commitment between the logic of individualism (as in capitalism) and that of reciprocity (as in indigenous culture). (Pachón, 2019)

A point of reference is the contribution of Razeto (1993), who emphasizes the consolidation and democratization of solidarity economic practices, anchored in a community fabric, but which operate in the reorganization of that same fabric.

De Melo Lisboa (2000), for his part, adopts and defines the concept as: popular solidarity economy (PSE), noting that it: “…emerges from community-based organizations (CBOs) generally linked to popular sectors. The popular solidarity economy is the economy of the excluded, of those who are not part of

the labor market and who are therefore forced to create their own work.

It involves productive activities based on small community enterprises, which are integrated into the market through self-employment in family farming, domestic work, and other means, from which they meet their own existential needs for material provision through relationships of solidarity. (Cueto, et al, 2018)

According to Uruguayan sociologist Pablo Guerra (2002), these diverse extensions can be framed under the term Popular Economies of Solidarity Organizations (PESOs), to distinguish them from non-solidarity organizations.

Likewise, from within market relations, one could speak of another economic circuit of Popular and Solidarity Economy Organizations (PSEO), distinct from the capitalist market circuit, in which the poor establish their own marketing networks (the Solidarity Market) in cooperatives and self-managed enterprises, which are gradually overcoming the challenges of the market and enabling (and making visible) their competitiveness.

PSEOs have a specific organizational structure and type of economic activity through which they seek to integrate into the market. Their members are aware of a shared problem and the need to work in solidarity. Each member contributes what they have (labor, tools) or a quota is established. Furthermore, they may supplement internal resources with external ones (solidarity donations and philanthropy); link their economic, socio-political, and ideological-cultural dimensions; and associate with similar organizations to develop economic and non-economic activities, among other things.

When those PSEOs emerge from popular sectors in both urban and rural areas may exhibit certain levels of planning in their formation and long-term sustainability: objectives, structure, the resources they have pooled, participatory, democratic, self-managed, and autonomous processes, relationships, and values, among others.

The Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano (2007) distinguishes between two types of solidarity economy:

- A solidarity economy generated by heterogeneous economic units of producers and workers, either individually or grouped in networks, that confront capitalism through an alternative mode of accumulation.
- The Popular Solidarity Economy, conceived as a mixed Latin American economic form that coexists with the public and capitalist economies, formed by freely associated groups of people and small historical communities, which maintain "primary" relationships and ties of cooperation among themselves, without claiming any ideological, political, or revolutionary self-identification.

The Brazilian economist Paul Singer (2004) was one of the first scholars to envision the possibility of considering the SSE as an alternative "strategy for economic and political empowerment" to capitalism. This author argues that worker-run, self-managed cooperatives are superior to capitalist enterprises, among other reasons, because internal conflicts are fewer and resolved openly and participatively. Furthermore, all relevant information flows throughout the organization, decisions are collective, and the opinions and experiences of all workers are considered.

Solidarity-based and self-managed enterprises emerge as extensions of the household unit and, for each worker, highlight the close relationship between the family's life strategies that gave rise to it and its mode of reproduction as an economic unit.

These extensions are formed for various reasons, such as: sharing a common situation (not only economic); being linked by residence, where they perform the same activity or work; belonging to the same community; and addressing an immediate economic problem.

An enterprise that relies partially on family labor, developed in the home of one of its members, is not seeking profit to accumulate, but rather income to contribute to the fund required to purchase means of subsistence or production in the market. (Coraggio, 2007)

The foreseeable drawback for a sustainability analysis is that the SSE proposes a coexistence based primarily on mechanisms of solidarity and cooperation, and

the absence of profit motives, in order to achieve efficient production and high levels of competitiveness.

For the Brazilian economist Luiz Inácio Gaiger (2007), the forms of the SSE constitute differentiated but subordinate parts of the capitalist mode of production, as were the forms of peasant family economies prior to capitalism. While they could certainly expand and gain vitality, at best they will only manage to reproduce themselves, and not society as a whole.

He considers the production relations of solidarity-based enterprises to be atypical for capitalists, and believes they may be fulfilling a historical role in building objective and subjective conditions that could facilitate a future transition to another form of production.

Additionally, he suggests that this historical role is not to outcompete corporations or displace the capitalist mode of production, but rather to offer empirical evidence that "self-management is not inferior to capitalist management in the development of productive forces, as Singer stated, because it has comparative advantages stemming from its specific social form of production".

In this regard, the Argentine economist Alejandro Rofman (2010) of the National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET) considers that:

"While the SSE constitutes a viable path to address the unmet needs of a very broad segment of society, this does not mean that it has the capacity to alter the foundations of capitalism. Rather, as understood by several other sectors, the social economy could represent that mechanism with which, under a "reformist" vision, could improve the lives of certain sectors, something similar to the idea of a "human face" of capitalism".

Most authors find it difficult to identify emancipatory potential in current social economy experiences, as they have developed in contexts critical for the Latin American majority.

However, a common denominator among the aforementioned authors is a

commitment to the will of the participating actors themselves, whether through an emphasis on a project with a utopian perspective (Coraggio), a conscious project (Quijano), or a utopian commitment embodied in social movements and popular sectors (Rofman).

Certainly, the complex relationships established between productive enterprises framed within SSEE and both the market and the private sector and international lending institutions cannot, in any way, be considered an alternative to capitalism.

In general, it is observable that the alternative practices and thinking of social economy enterprises emerge fragmented, and that, in order to build an organic and counter-hegemonic sector within capitalist society, it would be necessary to institutionalize practices that uphold other values, and to expand the creation of organizational forms that:

- Promote more egalitarian relationships by recognizing the diversity and dignity of individuals.
- Foster associationism and solidarity-based social relations.
- Prioritize the care of the material environment and the reproduction of life within the existing mixed economy, rather than through the accumulation of capital. (Vásquez, 2010)

Therefore, it becomes reasonable to admit that the purpose of such ventures is the expanded reproduction of the lives of the members or the household(s) to which the producers belong.

For their part, SSEE are positioned in a dual sphere between the productive and domestic reproductive spheres, which raises the need to recognize the integration of productive and reproductive functions as a particular economic circuit within the labor market. In this circuit, men more easily reconcile their dependent employment relationship, while women generally generate forms of self-employment in socially feminized tasks.

Some definitions equate the “economic-financial viability” of a single enterprise with its capacity to “be self-sustaining” based on the amount of income it can generate from its market integration—that is, through a micro-

level analysis.

In contrast, other definitions propose that the “sustainability of enterprises” should be analyzed at a systemic level, without limiting it to each individual enterprise. Entrepreneurship meaning that to apply criteria of “social sustainability,” the analysis must be broadened to meso and macro levels, and the focus extended to other dimensions of the economic, political, environmental, associative, and social capital spheres.

What is observed in practice is that for emerging SSEE it is an opportunity to try to meet needs neglected by the market, even if they must maintain competitiveness and efficiency and continue to adopt an exchange-value orientation without their market entry causing changes in the sphere of insertion of the products of this economy.

If the workers in these SSE ventures earn less than the minimum wage established by society, “and yet are still able to save or invest some of those meager earnings, they are not appropriating or using an economic surplus, but rather they are forgoing an additional part of their immediate minimum reproduction (...)”.

Now, if this favorable monetary balance of the enterprise is achieved by sacrificing the quality of life of its workers, it would be irrational. material. (Coraggio, 2008).

According to Gaiger (2007), entrepreneurship can be understood as “an attribute of the economic organization derived from its capacity to achieve economic and other related goals in the short and medium term, deploying the organization's efficiency and demonstrating its long-term sustainability.”

The efficiency of SSE initiatives should not be measured in terms of neoclassical efficiency, but rather in terms of systemic efficiency. Systemic efficiency encompasses the capacity to promote people's quality of life and foster lasting well-being for society.

It encompasses the social benefits, not merely monetary or economic, for the

members and the environment of the organizations in question, the guarantee of their longevity, and the creation of positive externalities on the natural environment.

The Solidarity Economy proposal, as an emancipatory strategy, is not limited to the creation of more or less successful projects and businesses to address the most pressing needs of the poor, the excluded, or the popular sectors. Rather, it must aspire to promote an alternative economy that, in addition to satisfying needs, enriches the lives of its participants and improves the overall environment, advancing the conviction that "another world is possible."

The possibility of working in production chains ensures that the added value at each stage of a product-system's economic cycle remains within local units. This fosters both control and appropriation of the entire economic process and, furthermore, consolidates control over portions of territory and other processes of life reproduction.

Implementing network projects for fair trade, critical consumption, etc., besides achieving significant short-term impacts, could generate the possibility of supporting welfare projects that function as service-based enterprises.

This is an intention that cannot be achieved in a vacuum, but rather by seeking other legislative measures that allow the substitution of tax payments for social activities, or also, the establishment of mechanisms to achieve the participation of solidarity organizations in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of social services.

Under these conditions, the microeconomic sustainability of an enterprise cannot be evaluated without incorporating the socioeconomic, cultural, and political context into the analysis, or, better said, without working on the construction and modification of that very context.

Social sustainability increases when a greater number of people feel part of the development process and believe that they, as well as their descendants, will benefit from it. The most socially sustainable societies and communities are more willing to work together to overcome challenges, generate public goods,

and allocate scarce resources in ways that are considered legitimate and fair, striving to ensure that all their members can prosper.

Under this form of analysis, it is possible to distinguish between:

- An argument about the achievement of SSEE sustainability as dependent on the development of institutions and public policies that promote the economic principles of reciprocity, Redistribution, domestic management, and planning.
- Another argument conditions the recognition of sustainability on the prior strengthening of the capacity of social and solidarity economy enterprises (SSEs) to compete in markets, based on various strategies and policies, both developed through internal efforts and promoted by public support institutions.

The assumption that another economy could be achieved by simply aggregating the same conditions under which each enterprise became viable would not be valid. It is unlikely that the enterprises of this new sector can be sustained without having built a consistent meso-socioeconomic context. Changing the structural context is an essential condition for considering the viability and sustainability of these particular initiatives.

Nor is it possible to immediately and fundamentally change the economic order, but independent initiatives could be fostered that address the needs of communities, seeking to control shared economic activity in a way that benefits the population as uniformly as possible.

Undoubtedly, in this, the private sector and the public sector play an important role, while, of course, preserving and defending the reasons that They gave rise to and gave life to both themselves and each individual social and solidarity economy (SSE).

In these terms, the SSE movement can be understood as a transitional proposal for an alternative rationality integrated into the existing mixed economy but also oriented towards social transformation through the development of an alternative socioeconomic system organized by the principle of the expanded reproduction of life for all.

In this regard, Singer (2007) reflects that "if the formation of the SSE as a productive sector required top-down construction and the indispensability of government support (vertical subsidiarity), it would be absolutely necessary to prioritize the struggle for governmental power to make the SSE viable as an alternative to capitalism".

Likewise, Singer believes it preferable that the development of the solidarity economy and its integration as a sector be fostered from the bottom up (horizontal subsidiarity) by the cooperative enterprises themselves that may have formed, rather than trying to achieve it through direct interference from government authorities, and thus, preserving the authenticity of SSE organizations.

According to Singer (2007), the typical unit of the SSE is the production cooperative. Building the skills of the organization and its members within the principles of solidarity would be perfectly possible if each enterprise could finance itself, obtain supplies, market its production, improve its technology, and educate its people through exchanges with other solidarity-based enterprises.

Singer (2007) adds: "As long as the foundations of the SSE are not guaranteed—such as sources of financing, marketing networks, technical and scientific advice, ongoing training for workers, and legal and institutional support from government authorities—it will be difficult for it to competitively integrate into the markets and confront capitalist enterprises." It is in this aspect that Singer (2007) emphasizes and demands government promotional action.

Singer (2007) stresses that, once this structure of public promotion and support is achieved, based on their market integration, the SSE units must ensure the capacity for self-generated income by the enterprises; that is, they must guarantee this key condition for sustainability.

The perspectives of the SSE

According to Coraggio (2009), the emergence of the characteristic enterprises of the social and solidarity economy (SSE) does not seem to depend on objective conditions (whether existing or not) but rather on the political will of the individuals who envision the possibility and desire for a different society. He assumes that the social function of these productive or service-oriented enterprises is to address needs and guarantee rights considered "legitimate," but which are currently unfulfilled.

Coraggio (2009) opposes the primacy of market relations (which does not necessarily imply a rejection of integration and competition within the market) and proposes prioritizing the production of use values while simultaneously supporting the SSE as an activity subsidized by the State. Furthermore, he states that: “for alternative economic forms to reproduce themselves on their own foundations, primitive accumulation is necessary, which could only be achieved through political struggle… and by reversing the process of converting land, labor, money, and knowledge into commodities”.

According to Hinkelammert (1999), widespread development is possible through market intervention to lead to the establishment of local and regional systems of the division of labor that are, as far as possible, disconnected from capitalist competition.

Hinkelammert and Mora (2009) then add that only adequate economic planning can guarantee an income distribution that allows for: the satisfaction of needs, employment opportunities for all, and a relationship with the environment that makes life on the planet sustainable.

In line with these contributions from Coraggio and Hinkelammert, Lía Tiriba (2007) states that the possibility of developing a new work culture today depends on contesting state resources, achieving protectionist intervention for social and solidarity economy (SSE) initiatives, providing them with a favorable legal framework, and promoting multiple and varied policies for their development and coordination, among other things. This also requires implementing state intervention to regulate markets, segment the market, and organize incentives for demand for grassroots production.

Finally, Coraggio (2009) asserts that "in order to apply a coherent criterion of sustainability, which counters the idealization of the commercial enterprise regarding a perfect market, critical theory must develop a criterion of social sustainability, appropriate for the SSE adapted to a process of transition, which admits the application of 'subsidies' (in education, training, tax exemption, health systems, among others) in use of the principle of progressive redistribution of public resources, and contributions of labor or other resources (voluntary work, mutual aid networks, use of housing for production, among others)… often based on relationships of reciprocity and not counted as costs."

Susana Hintze (2006) argues that "the expanded intergenerational reproduction of the workforce employed in socioeconomic organizations of the SSE requires social protections." Therefore, to promote the sustainability of this sector from the State, she considers the current development of a public system for the reproduction of associative and self-managed work to be necessary.

At the Montevideo meeting on October 20, 2008, RIPESS issued its Charter of Principles, which articulates its values and principles. It maintains that the social and solidarity economy is based on human values and principles of solidarity that advocate for the recognition of the other as the foundation of human action and the source of renewal in politics, economics, and society, which translates into the following basic elements:

1) The recovery of human dynamism in the economy. The Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) requires adherence to all its principles, is more demanding, and is a broader and more varied field. A large part of economic activity on a global scale is realized through self-management. In addition to empowering, it asserts the right of its members to decide what kind of life they wish to live, free from impositions by the State or trade policies with third countries. The SSE is a transformative movement that arises from experimentation, practice, and shared knowledge. Through their daily spending, consumers can contribute to changing the rules of production and consumption. In these actions and in their own capacity for choice, they can transform their act of consumption into an act of social transformation. From this approach emerge cooperative practices of responsible consumption, fair trade, social markets, and social currencies that enable other forms of consumption.

Various forms of financial intermediation have developed in the use of money, such as solidarity loans and the management of social microcredit, among others, with collective debates based on ethical and socially responsible criteria acquiring particular importance.

2) Social and ecological sustainability. In addition to assessing the capacity to meet needs, the effects on the social conditions under which goods and services are produced, exchanged, and consumed are also measured through practices such as fair trade and ethical finance. Within the social and solidarity economy (SSE), a Technical Committee evaluates economic variables such as price, quality, employability, and salary levels, among others, all of which are subject to public debate. There is also a Volunteer Committee that catalogs all types of organizations and companies that have agreed to implement the Balance Sheet for the Common Good.
3) Democratizing the local economy from the ground up. In local development, territory is considered a decisive strategic factor. Beyond the economic potential offered by its geographic and natural resources, the mobilization of human, social, political, and cultural capacities facilitated by its proximity determines the direction the local economy can take to improve the population's living conditions in harmony with the environment. Social and solidarity economy (SSE) practices are structured through fundamental social relationships within democratic, assembly-based processes where individuals exercise their freedom and autonomy by fostering close and rooted social connections.

At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development "Rio+20" in June 2012, RIPESS declared its full commitment to promoting the SSE within the UN system, particularly to encourage countries to adopt SSE approaches within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2015-2030).

Under the leadership of the United Nations Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the SSE (UNTFSSE) was established in 2013, bringing together agencies from the OECD, RIPESS, the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), and others, to study the structural causes of poverty and strategies for achieving the SDGs.

In concrete terms, regarding the practices of the SSE, some actors, primarily promoters of economic forms and ventures, say that three schools of thought can be distinguished, while others say that there are three levels of intervention, depending on which vision predominates in them with respect to the perspectives and scope of actions.

The first school of thought is an "integrationist" option that seeks the (re)integration of groups of people excluded from the labor market towards self-employment, acting at the microeconomic level and focusing its action on poverty alleviation.

In this approach, social enterprises (SEEs) coexist with the private sector and the State. The former are responsible for filling the void left by the capitalist market, integrating excluded workers based on their own results, and seeking to reduce the influence of oligopolies and achieve a better balance in the distribution of opportunities and income, with the aim of moving towards a different kind of economy. (Martínez, 2016)

In these programs, the evaluation of the sustainability of microenterprises is based on the efficiency and competitiveness of the capitalist paradigm, which affirms the need to achieve minimum scales of costs and results. This excludes the non-market sphere characteristic of the domestic, family, or community economy and leads to avoiding support for sole proprietorships or self-employment.

The second option, called "coexistence," involves SSEE acting as actors in a mixed economy at the meso level, generally adopting a network and local development partnership approach, without fostering any long-term socioeconomic change.

These SSEE are supported by capitalist social enterprises and civil NGOs and are included within the same discourse based on the logic of social responsibility. (Strada, 2012)

In addition to the potential income contributions to the families involved, this

option promotes the creation of an organic sector (subsystem) of SSE, problematizing the sustainability and efficiency of the promoted ventures and participating in the redistributive logics jointly adopted by the State and capitalist enterprises to ensure the subsistence of excluded and informal sectors.

The third approach to "overcoming" seeks to demonstrate the systemic advantages of the functioning of SSEE at the macroeconomic level compared to the practices of capital, patriarchy, and other forms of human exploitation. It considers dimensions beyond the economic, such as the political, environmental, associative, cultural, and social capital aspects, and aims to promote the creation of a system or the construction of "Another Economy."

From this perspective, if level 3 cannot be achieved, the accomplishments at levels 1 and even 2 could remain isolated or subordinated within an economy dominated by the market principle. It would be possible to act at level 3 without the foundation of integrative practices at level 2, thus preventing any modification of the statist character of level 1.

While action could always be taken at level 1, the lack of level 2 would render its sustainability ineffective and unguaranteed. In general, this is a political issue, since all three levels can occur: either under democratic solidarity, or where the recognition of the other has become customary, or within utilitarian-motivated projects.

It is common for those who construct SSEE models, intent on eliminating all types of conflict, to downplay the specificities of the relationships within the solidarity work process and, adopting a utopian vision, merely extol its superiority over wage labor and proclaim the transformation of the system, or the State, into a solidarity-based one. (Presta, 2010)

This is the same as describing public policies as the exclusive result of struggles between the economic, social, and political forces representing the sectors that make up a pluralistic structure.

However, sometimes situations arise that are difficult to define. In the integration between solidarity-based distribution and capitalist marketing, the

possibility of creating marketing circuits specific to the SSE emerges as a "middle ground." This helps resolve difficulties in assigning a "fair price" in those solidarity-based economic forms known as "responsible consumption" or "solidarity consumption."

For its part, the need to build local solidarity systems is generally accepted, whether by historical communities or through free associations, relatively self-sufficient and with articulated production activities and the reproduction of everyone's lives. What is not entirely clear is the definition of the degrees of this "autarky/integration" with respect to the market.

Under the SSE-based approach, a regional institutional framework is required; therefore, it is necessary to start by strengthening the existing institutional infrastructure and creating new ones.

The results of the implementation of this practice allows for the generation of new designs and sentiments that motivate the interest of members, creating a sense of belonging that could even lead to the reappropriation of the means of production from the bourgeoisie and the State.

Singer, Gaiger, and Núñez agree that it is indeed necessary to have a “market-oriented business strategy and an accumulation matrix that will allow for growth and successful competition within the capitalist system that opposes it.”

The authors' intentions are clear, as they understand that market competition should not be separated from a productive and exchange context marked by relationships of reciprocity, solidarity, and cooperation. What ultimately becomes unsustainable is subjecting SSE initiatives to the idea of always growing in an unsuitable environment.

Given the possibility of creating a market protected from external competition for their products, we would be facing a “civil society solution to a market and production problem,” that is, a “non-capitalist solution to a capitalist problem.”

Now, considering a segment that is not of interest to capital, if this protected market were only for a specific sector, such as the “commercialization” of

certain final products, then we would be facing a capitalist strategy for the survival of such an SSE within capitalism.

What ultimately becomes truly unsustainable is subjecting SSE initiatives to the idea of always growing in an environment that is not intentionally well-suited. The authors are clear that the competition they face in the market should not be separated from their own productive and exchange context, marked by relationships of reciprocity, solidarity, and cooperation.

According to the Brazilian sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2011), when the SSE is subsumed within the capitalist totality, it becomes functional to the system. Therefore, it is necessary to reflect on the contradictions and understand which elements allow or prevent it from tending towards the integration of economic processes with others in the territory, inserting itself into networks of mutual support, autonomy, and collaboration with the State.

Thus, the aspiration for an "outward transition" from the capitalist production system requires an epistemic framework that generates possibilities for overcoming these loops of subsumption that prevent it from developing other associated and self-managed work centers.

For all the above reasons, and without having to reject the Given the subsidiary nature of state intervention, the debate about the degree of alternative that these productive or service-oriented ventures represent does not appear to be settled.

The need to redefine the horizons of the SSE proposals is evident, as they are not always clear, as in the case of: solidarity markets, fair trade, responsible consumption, solidarity finance, social banking, social currency, social efficiency, solidarity economy, organic production, worker cooperatives (...)" (Coraggio, 2005).

It is also clear that many of these economic forms are not valued for their relationality, use value, plurality, and even less for their coexistence with nature; consequently, their trans capitalist potential has not yet been made visible.

Similarly, doubts persist regarding the limited application of the principles of the SSE (solidarity, cooperation, self-management, participation), given that they are only valid within a mixed economy that, in turn, has the task of guaranteeing the self-sufficiency and self-reliance of sectors marginalized by the market economy.

It is necessary that countless diverse economic expressions and practices continue to emerge and be projected effectively and realistically onto local and regional stages within the process of social fabrication.

The struggles for alternative production must continue to be promoted both within and outside the State, which implies overcoming distrust of the State to mobilize its resources toward popular sectors for the construction of their own alternatives based on autonomy and cooperation.

The emancipatory potential and prospects for success of alternative production depend largely on the integration of their processes of economic transformation into cultural, social, and political processes.

The success of alternative production models depends on their integration into collaborative and mutual support networks that allow for collaboration among different actors, both within the same sector and across diverse proposals, to strengthen a broad social movement that promotes alliances while respecting the autonomy of each organization. (Souza and Rodríguez, 2011)

Coraggio himself (2005), in a text entitled “Is Another Economy Possible Without (Another) Politics?”, identifies at least two characteristics of the SSE in Latin America:

- An ideological rejection of the market system.
- An effective infiltration of market logic through seemingly instrumental and neutral concepts and methodologies such as marketing, managing microcredit, measuring efficiency, and achieving sustainability.

It is not yet time to break abruptly with the capitalist model; the concept of an alternative to capitalism still implies that there must be a gradual process of evaluating this transformation.

The Processes of Economic, Social, and Solidarity Literacy

The Brazilian educator and economist Marcos Arruda (2003, 2006, 2010) defines the SSE as a counter-hegemonic development paradigm with the potential for structural transformation.

Given that inequality permeates spaces of deliberation, it is necessary to promote the development and modernization of society by fostering and encouraging the coexistence of multiple “counter-publics” with their own sets of norms and spaces for deliberation.

A counter-public is a common identity label whose formation is fostered or encouraged in order to develop a grassroots collective to participate with the State in the creation and implementation of laws, policies, and programs of interest.

With regard to the SSE movement, the political awakening derived from the definition and staging of associated and self-managed economic initiatives is the banner that can incite the modernization of society and induce a post-development proposal.

The exercise of power achieved within the framework of "counter publics," with social consequences in the spheres of family, economy, and public life, allows for the inclusion in public debate of demands that had traditionally been treated as "private" or established under the norms of procedural rationality, or simply remained invisible.

This conception of power achieved through a process different from that of market autonomy or the procedural rationality of the public sphere, as in the lifeworld described by Habermas, is what creates alternative possibilities for modernity.

For “counter publics” to emerge, it is necessary to promote strategies of collective action framed within rationalizations as a political project. In this

action, social and institutional organizations deploy their political, social, and institutional dimension, building greater plurality. Beyond specific subjects and actors, as a form of collective expression capable of exercising action in the public sphere, they are responsible for proclaiming:

1) The economic system as a whole must be social and based on solidarity.
2) Certain needs must be conceived as priority rights for all.
3) There must be recognition of the value of human beings (not as instruments or mere human capital).
4) A harmonious relationship with nature must be ensured, implying duties towards it; in which society is recognized as having the right to participate, through the State, the market, and its broad associational capacity.
5) Economic growth cannot take precedence over the objectives of ensuring a good life and convivial sociability; in which not only how much is produced matters, but also the conditions under which it is produced. where economic democracy is a prerequisite for democracy in general. (Gonzalez, 2021)

Marcos Arruda (2004) argues that, in order for the structural transition from the current concrete reality of a mixed economy to a post-capitalist economy based on the SSE to occur, it is necessary to create, at the state and civil society levels, institutional structures that promote the decentralization of political power, as well as the direct participation of organized civil society in political decision-making and the implementation of policy programs. (Estévez, 2014)

An integrated framework such as the one proposed can advance the constitution of a solidarity sector in stages. Initially, the expansion of the solidarity economy is urgently needed, with a three-pronged strategy:

1) Competing in the capitalist market.
2) Developing networks, production chains, and markets for solidarity-based collaboration.
3) Participating in national and global networks that strive to impose regulations and controls on capital.

In the second phase, when these networks begin to constitute a new system and a new culture, a mixed economy prevails, during the preparation for a third

phase: the predominance of the local-global social and solidarity economy (Arruda, 2004).

Under this framework, the strategy is always geared towards making political activity an integral part of the culture and constantly seeks to empower and involve individuals and social groups in the widespread mobilization of people around common goals of democratic development, in the broadest sense of democracy (Cadena, 2005).

What gives depth to the strategy are the processes of economic, social, and solidarity literacy based on the concept of Popular Education, developed by Paulo Freire in the 1980s. Its objective is to impart to participants in the social and solidarity economy movement a way to influence the democratization of society, starting from the pursuit of what satisfies basic needs and, above all, emphasizing the emancipatory nature implicit in its values.

The educational model of Popular Education is based on: conscientization, dialogue, and praxis, as pillars of development. Conscientization involves individuals acquiring a critical understanding of their sociopolitical and economic reality, recognizing the power structures that influence their lives.

The dialogic approach seeks to engage participants in the educational process, encouraging them to question and reflect on what they learn. A central technique is problematization, which involves them in identifying and analyzing the problems they face in their daily lives.

Praxis, referring to the combination of reflection and action, implies that participants not only analyze their situation but also develop and implement strategies to improve it. Its participatory and active teaching methods promote the development of practical skills and a critical understanding of reality, seeking to inspire individuals to become agents of change in their own lives and communities. (De La Hera, 2023)

Schools and human communities are organized so that the participants themselves can carry out educational tasks by acting as teachers, transforming them into institutions for everyone and by everyone, offering community-based

education for the community, educating both parents and children together, and ensuring that different people participate, adapting appropriately to everyone's level.

Educators involved in popular education strive to help learners understand and recognize the various social and economic injustices they face, and they try to motivate and teach them how to combat these injustices, seeking to bring about change in their individual circumstances and achieve a better quality of life than they currently experience due to the various problems they have encountered, perhaps because of belonging to a particular community or group.

Popular education originates in culture and society, seeking diverse ways of engaging in politics and constructing a shared understanding of culture in different places. It is based on a political-educational approach that seeks to achieve social empowerment and a sense of belonging to a group and society through one's own context, aiming to create a more humane society where all people can enjoy full democratic awareness. (De La Hera, 2023)

Popular education is based on community pedagogy, in which a single individual is not the key to education. Instead, individuals within a group educate themselves collectively, developing the capacity to understand the group and adopting a critical stance toward the realities they confront, based on the various reflections of the learning process.

Therefore, it could be said that popular education seeks to empower diverse social actors to achieve active participation based on knowledge, the capacity of individuals to innovate, and the possibility of production, work, and organization. This allows for the construction of diverse perspectives to achieve personal and social change toward a society in which all citizens, regardless of their personal context, are citizens with full rights in all facets of society. At the same time, it aims to ensure that all citizens develop an awareness of reality so they can understand it, as well as the development of critical citizenship that allows them to make personal and conscious decisions about the situations that surround everyone. (De La Hera, 2023)

IV – THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR THE PRACTICE OF SOLIDARITY

Paradigms and Approaches to Government Strategies Regarding SSE

The economic dimension must be considered the study of true life-or-death issues, because the fate of life on Earth hinges on this dilemma, which includes ethical, political, environmental, and cultural factors.

Economic growth is the key indicator of capitalist development; therefore, it has become the critical point where all modern alter-globalist movements and ideologies converge.

The results of the impetus generated by market-driven and structural adjustment policies during the 1980s revealed limitations in promoting sustained growth processes in various underdeveloped regions, and especially in Latin America.

This decade is remembered because its end marked a shift from a state-centered development model to one dominated by the market. Some scholars refer to this period as the lost decade due to the economic and social failures of following the recommendations of the so-called Washington Consensus, which advocated for the full integration of countries into global trade flows. (Diaz-Albertini, 2003)

At the end of society, as Margaret Thatcher stated, the market, as the great coordinator of neoliberal art, integrated technology with social reality. Technology is represented by hardware and software, and social reality by processes, actors, communities, roles, and rights, thus unlocking the conceptualizations linked to the provision of specific solutions and forcing us to think in terms of systematizations, and thus embrace the Sociotechnical Paradigm. (Strada, 2012)

The processes of state reform in Latin America, initiated in the 1980s, including privatization, decentralization, and the delegation of public management

responsibilities to private entities at the local or regional level, began to change the political landscape, and since then the state has been gradually reducing its role.

In the early 1990s, within a historical context associated with globalization and the strengthening of regional integration, coupled with the European debate on the concept of governance, new reforms were introduced that raised the need to create efficient institutions to guarantee the functioning of a competitive market.

These reforms focused on public administration, the judicial system, labor legislation, and capital markets. Furthermore, renewed attention was given to education and health. (Zurbriggen, 2011)

The emerging concept of governance referred to all the governing processes, institutions, procedures, and practices through which matters concerning society as a whole are decided and regulated. Good governance involves coordination for the shared use of power between the public and private sectors, with its central tenet being the acceptance by political authorities of the extension of the public sphere beyond the State.

Governance as a strategy requires a normative dimension for evaluating the governing process. This is how we arrive at "the necessary and sufficient condition for establishing an effective human order based on the capacity of individuals to integrate the logics of the market and of law" (Sánchez, 2009).

However, critical analysis reveals that a market society needs to be governed by a "governmentality" of an economic nature, not so much by a political one. Society could not become "market-based" without the mercantile transformation of all social relations within it, of all behaviors and values, and even of the relationship of individuals with themselves.

Furthermore, it is a fact that the governance of procedures and anonymous automatisms in the Habermasian lifeworld facilitates a system of governance that obscures the political relationship and responsibility between rulers and the ruled.

For their part, leading economists like Joseph Stiglitz and George Soros have denounced the crisis of capitalism since the early 1990s, arguing that the logic of the capitalist market is not geared towards solving chronic global problems such as food, health, education, or the environment, nor the asymmetries in access to information and cultural goods, among others.

However, the accurate identification of greater mutual trust arising from community associations fostered by government programs has been an important contributing factor to transformative governance, insofar as it has been implemented as a bottom-up development process.

When there are different levels of power in relationships between people, the allocation of state incentives to encourage citizens to associate after receiving some benefit can be a way to strengthen habits of collaboration and association among different levels of society.

Associations, whether formal or legal, through their potential for contractual arrangements between the State, private enterprise, and civil society, and their commitment to accountability to users, transcend vertical structures, particularly those related to exclusively hierarchical political associations dominated by an unequal distribution of power that negatively impacts the formation of social capital.

Privately led social intervention programs, known as vertical subsidiarity programs, are typically designed to address urgent community problems related to infrastructure and land development, economic growth, education, political participation, and the promotion of arts and sports. They also contribute to transforming aspects of reality, aiming at development.

The prominent role attributed to civil society during the 1990s was not only intended to delegitimize the political establishment and pit civil society against the State, but above all, to facilitate private and corporate hegemony and strengthen economic actors, interests, and market forces. The process of society's transformation into a market is disguised by rhetoric surrounding civil society.

Civic engagement is distinct from civility. Citizens' civic commitment involves considering the common good within a framework of self-responsibility for social and cultural values, as well as for sentiment. Civic engagement helps build greater mutual trust in their reciprocal relationships, allowing them to develop tolerance and empathy.

Civility, on the other hand, is synonymous with citizen action undertaken by private individuals without the intention of assuming institutional roles. In civil associations, individuals continue to manage their own affairs privately and define their own private scope according to "good" moral standards.

Indeed, the seeds of civil society that, since the early 1990s, have condemned neoliberal policies, raised their voices in the arena of political public opinion, and fostered “social self-reflexivity” were participation, collective action, and networks driven by an institutionalized third sector operating outside the state apparatus. (Uribe, 2010)

The SSE movement, with its characteristics of participatory democracy, worker ownership of the means of production, use of labor-intensive, profitable, and environmentally sustainable “intermediate technologies,” and its productive, commercial, and financial links based on solidarity practices, can contribute significantly to the democratic development of society.

The critical current within development studies refers to other horizons of possibility in which self-management practices operate according to their own logic of autonomy, advocating for a transition toward degrowth practices in those activities of permanent and unlimited exploitation of nature under capitalism. (Aguilar and Sotomayor, 2019)

The aim of social and solidarity-based post-development is to foster an anti-hegemonic and emancipatory practice that sustains an outward-oriented transition, improving the living conditions of all those affected by the prevailing ideology of progress and modernity.

Therefore, moving in this direction, it is crucial to first highlight the need to re-

embed the economy within other social relations. Likewise, it is necessary to modify language and symbols to make visible the activities that are truly contributing to the paradigmatic shift. These actions make it possible to recover the importance of relational goods produced through interaction between individuals, goods that are valued only to the extent that they generate shared reciprocity.

Second, it is essential to promote the circulation of goods in a non-market way through solidarity economy experiences, that is, to prioritize use value over exchange value. These actions are implemented through self-consumption and mechanisms of gifting and reciprocity. In this regard, we propose the recovery of non-market economic experiences that are fundamental to the reproduction of life, such as:

- Non-monetized transactions (gifts, bartering, among others.)
- Community or alternative currencies.
- Fair trade networks.
- Consumer and producer cooperatives.
- Reuse
- Raking

Thirdly, strengthening production methods that align with nature's cycles is essential. Therefore, it is necessary to consider suspending certain economic activities until the necessary natural recovery period has passed, allowing for the replenishment of these resources.

In the 1990s, the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) was introduced, understood as the set of social actions and contributions to the well-being of the private sector within the community, beyond its legal obligations. In implementing this concept, various companies and business groups have created self-funded foundations to operate their own social projects and programs, thus defining the business model known as the "Social Enterprise."

Much of the expectation surrounding what the social enterprise movement could achieve has arisen from the need for policymakers to persuade the widest possible public that outsourcing services does not necessarily imply privatization (although that may be the ultimate intention), and that the policy of

outsourcing services must result in social benefits.

According to Pearce (2003), there are two types of social enterprises: reformist and radical, both of which exhibit a strong sense of social responsibility. The former channel a significant portion of their profits toward philanthropic endeavors, while the latter adhere to sets of values and principles that ensure everything they do, and how they do it, leads to a social or community benefit. (Kay, Roy, and Donaldson, 2003)

Certainly, a social enterprise subject to competitive pressures faces the loss of its independence and may find itself facing significant difficulties in maintaining the quality of its social purpose and surviving financially. Over time, there is a risk that it will be replaced by another private company. (Zurbano and De La Cal, 2015)

Some of these companies develop psychosocial intervention programs for groups of people and communities, both independently and as state contractors. Their actions are agreed upon amidst institutional conflicts and crises, which is why it is common to begin with a preliminary process of raising awareness about social change, leading to preliminary projects that must address the community's urgent problems.

The development of the concept of governance as a heterarchy, where it is acknowledged that the state is not the dominant actor in decision-making processes, emerges because of the interaction between public and private actors. This interaction associates governance with civil society, ultimately leading to the recognition of negotiated interdependence and coordination between systems and organizations.

The development model proposed by the new civil solidarity enterprises for the support of governments is interpreted as an element of institutional innovation and can be summarized as a transformative socio-technical intervention policy, of social participation in which systemic problem/solution relationships are focused on generating dynamics of social inclusion and sustainable development, in the manner of a complex process of co-production and co-construction.

Such types of government interventions equate the achievement of development with an interrelated social process of economic, political, and cultural liberation through which humanity assumes control of its own destiny. Prosperity and well-being represent a level at which all citizens can live “free from worries, more humanely, and without the anxieties of survival.” (Estévez, 2014)

This new conception of governance excludes any form of political interaction that is not organized in terms of a horizontal network, whereby the fundamental characteristic of society becomes the “empowerment” of private sector and civil society organizations.

In this regard, Bruni and Zagmani (2007), referring to a type of relational social capital involved in generating bonds, state: “If reciprocity is the founding essence of social capital, then subsidiarity will be that of empowerment”.

According to Putnam (2008), the key link connecting individuals' homes to public institutions may be community association, a byproduct of spontaneous social creation far more important than any specific "reward or incentive" in terms of satisfying people's immediate needs, since it initiates the virtuous cycle of "social capital" accumulation, which strengthens each time it is used. The proper identification of this asset can contribute marginally to calculating the profitability of small family businesses, especially in rural communities.

Social capital, materialized in the various social networks and civil society associations that emphasize political participation, influences the democratic development of society in two ways: the "external" impact on the entire body of state officials and the "internal" impact on segmented social groups. Vertical links between grassroots organizations and the challenge of national and globalized society, through integration and synergy, should contribute to:

1) Enriching the expectations and perspectives of the poor, thus strengthening trust.
2) Empowering social organizations to develop and enforce standards.
3) Integrating diverse social sectors through linkages that enable consensus-building around sustainable development.

Finally, it can be concluded that the evolution of the concept of economic development has revealed that current theory and models are on the wrong track and that there is an urgent need for a paradigm shift.

The most up-to-date approach adopted by international economic organizations such as the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) seeks to endogenously reproduce the characteristics of the economic cycle as defined by regulations by authority (hierarchy), the market (economy), or networks of associations and organizations (heterarchy). (Hynes, 2020)

Since 2018, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has emphasized a whole-of-society approach, which could naturally encompass a participatory and adaptive process with continuous monitoring and iterative evaluation at different levels, as many countries also participate in comprehensive national risk assessment exercises that reflect and integrate a participatory and iterative process.

The more recently emerging concept of governance is a hybrid of sustainability and systems thinking, in which all governance processes, institutions, procedures, and practices become instruments for decision-making and regulation on matters that concern society as a whole.

On the one hand, the conceptual contribution of sustainability has gained strength in recent years precisely because of its anthropological emphasis. On the other hand, systems thinking effectively incorporates the complex network of interconnected and interconnected systems that arise in governance.

This governance model, based on agents (MBA), network analysis, machine learning, and a systems approach, focuses on negotiated coordination among interdependent components and organizations.

A systems approach can bring many competing solutions, and with them, the emerging challenge for its governance becomes ensuring transparency, accountability, and the inclusion of the risk management process, as well as the effectiveness, seasonality, equity, and sustainability of the outcome.

The Interaction of the State with SSE Organizations

Current experiences of SSE organizations, both in terms of integration and alternatives to the capitalist sector, demonstrate that the sustainability of such ventures cannot be expected on their own; rather, it requires the support of state aid.

These organizations have had to move beyond simply promoting their programs to combat poverty and social exclusion, towards empowering themselves as direct actors who enter into agreements with the State to develop joint social interventions. This has allowed them to protect their self-management and foster the generation of financial resources.

For their part, the principles and values that guide the actions of solidarity organizations, as well as their management and operational structures, can serve as a catalyst to stimulate state interest in developing joint social inclusion projects. (Zurbano and Delacal, 2015)

In this sense, governments have seen an opportunity to co-opt these private entities in their political work so that, while generating sufficient economic surplus to sustain themselves, they can also expand the coverage of social benefits.

Many governments promote their programs and activities outlined in development plans by supporting social enterprises that operate in the scientific, cultural, educational, or social solidarity fields, through public procurement or tax incentives, depending on the level of collaborative participation.

From the State's perspective, social innovation through governance expenditures consists of new practices, actions, and strategies developed in response to needs that are unmet or only partially met by both the State and private enterprise.

The resulting social innovation comprises new arrangements, modes of interaction, participation, new organizations, placements, and forms of

cooperation among actors and organizations obtained through governance expenditures. (Martínez, 2016)

According to Razeto (2006), the most important criteria of this governance expenditure model for inclusion are the following:

- The same groups and communities that experience exclusion are necessary to generate inclusion.
- The affected communities and groups themselves must define the objectives and actions of the projects based on their own needs, aspirations, and interests.

This involves guaranteeing sufficient economic resources and access to public services, but also recognizing and improving people's capabilities and fostering participation in society.

- Communities and neighborhood organizations must activate their own capacities and become involved so that governance programs and expenditures are locally based and their effects spread from the bottom up.
- The aim is to integrate family and community life with activities aimed at generating economic resources that sustain them, taking into account the diversity of people.

Following the lead of international organizations such as the IDB and the World Bank, solidarity is now being championed by local governments as an ethical value reinforced by religious and political arguments that advocate a moral sanction against the "greed" of certain capitalist entrepreneurs, even going so far as to accept philanthropic practices and corporate social responsibility as if it were "capitalism with a human face." (Strada, 2012)

Some of the conditions these projects must meet relate not so much to the final objective achieved (which may be poverty reduction, improved social cohesion, or territorial development), but rather to how it is integrated into the local governance spending process itself.

Each country has regulations governing the forms of state intervention in SSEE. Colombian law commonly seeks to promote the development of the SSE and

social inclusion through social promotion and development programs, sometimes employing Collaboration Contracts implemented by national or international firms specializing in civil economy, and other times establishing Public-Private Partnership Agreements, mostly with national organizations.

Both the Conclusions and the Appendices of this paper address the application of these types of contracts, making it necessary to outline their operational mechanisms within the context of public policy and social technologies.

The Collaboration Contract. This is a strategic alliance or agreement between a government entity and a non-profit organization, whereby the former implements programs outlined in the development plan using public funds. For example, to promote production chains, regional governments can invest in productive infrastructure and guarantee producers' access to strategic inputs such as certified plant material.

In this way, farming families organized as non-profit producer entities gain access to credit, economies of scale, and participation in the added value generated by the agro-industry, developing agribusinesses on their own land. At the same time, from the private sector, businesses contribute experience and knowledge in the production chains, providing technical assistance and purchasing the produce at competitive prices.

This type of contract is only applicable when the Procurement Process meets the following conditions:

- That the object of the contract directly corresponds to programs and activities of public interest included in the National or Regional Development Plan, according to the level of the State Entity, through which the Entity seeks exclusively to promote the rights of persons in situations of manifest vulnerability or defenselessness, the rights of minorities, the right to education, the right to peace, artistic, cultural, and sporting expressions, and the promotion of local ethnic diversity.
- That the contract does not entail a commutative relationship in which there is direct consideration in favor of the State Entity, nor precise instructions given by the State Entity to the contractor to fulfill the object of the contract.

- That there is no supply in the market of the goods, works, and services required for the strategy and policy of the development plan that is the subject of the contract, other than the supply made by private non-profit entities. or that, if it exists, contracting with private non-profit entities represents the optimization of public resources in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, economy, and risk management.

The public-private partnership agreement. This is an agreement between a State Entity and a non-profit entity for the joint development of activities related to the duties and functions assigned to State Entities by law.

For example, in order to promote the execution of a road infrastructure project in the present, without having to wait for resources from future budgets, a State entity (as INVIAS) and a natural or legal person under private law (as the Department of Risaralda) organize themselves as a non-profit entity and agree on a financing model to build a road supported by contributions from the General Budget of the Nation, the territorial entity's own resources, and the revenue from a toll system. Another state financial institution (as FINDETER), acting as a trust company, establishes an independent trust fund to manage these funds while also providing the necessary direct loans for the project.

Obviously, the bylaws of the non-profit entity must allow it to carry out the purpose of the contracting process it will undertake with the national, regional, or local trust company. A non-profit entity is considered to have recognized suitability when it qualifies as appropriate and suitable to carry out the activities that are the subject of the contracting process and has experience in the relevant field.

The Trust Company must honor the principle of competition by selecting the non-profit entity best suited to fulfill or verify the capacity of such an entity to perform, the functions assigned to them by law for the provision of public goods and related services.

State aid to social enterprises. State aid contributes to covering the expenses of a specific systematic objective outside of ordinary practice; that is, something that is not done within normal procedures. This differs from subsidies or

assistance, which seek to satisfy a specific need at a given time in an extraordinary manner.

Current legal systems define state aid as subsidies that may have a strictly charitable purpose aimed at:

1) Guiding an activity of public interest, in such a way as to ensure a certain reciprocity in favor of the State.
2) Exercising the State's power of intervention in the economy, an allocation that, by mandate, must imply a return or benefit for society, without which the subsidy lacks equity and all justification.
3) To comply with a constitutional precept that expressly authorizes it, to guarantee fundamental rights through access to goods and services for those with the greatest needs and lowest incomes, thereby ensuring a social benefit or compensation.

Subsidies. The OECD, referring to market price support transfers, classifies them according to the form of negotiation. The following classification of transfers is generally accepted without much discussion:

Direct financial transfers, which include all direct payments, cost reductions, or general services from the government to the solidarity sector.

- Indirect services and transfers, which include all active intervention and explicit services provided by the public sector, such as those related to regulation, adaptation and compliance, performance, and research. These may or may not be specified in the public budget, but they must be recorded in the entity’s
- accounting records. These are rarely negative.
- Other interventions with varying short- and long-term effects refer to interventions that have a negative short-term impact but are beneficial in the long term, such as environmental regulations and product regulations. These are typically recorded as other public expenditures and in the beneficiaries' accounts.
- The absence of intervention implies actions that are cost-free for the government and generally have short-term benefits for producers, allowing them to impose production costs on others. Examples include free access, deferral of regulations, or suspension of regulations.

Consequently, current government subsidies exclude forms of assistance that cannot reasonably be assigned a value, as well as transactions that are indistinguishable from the entities' other normal operations. Furthermore, the public administration obligated to provide the relevant funds reserves the right to the following supervisory actions:

1) Auditing and inspection of the beneficiary activity.
2) Revocation of the subsidy in the event of non-compliance by the beneficiary.
3) Disciplining the activity, which may include imposing sanctions for violations.

The cost to the government can be found in the public budget, while the revenue for the entities will appear directly in their cash flow. Various taxes and fees represent negative subsidies.

Regarding private sector participation, the most common forms are mixed collaborative relationships between public and private businesses and Social Enterprises, which are usually classified as:

- **The business network**. A market-oriented cooperation mechanism between public and private companies, with voluntary membership, that seeks common strategic goals through joint action. As strategies are implemented, these networks modify their management methods to generate new types of dialogue among small businesses and new roles for the government and support institutions.
- **Inter-company cooperation arrangements**. These are also network-based scenarios of horizontal integration in which companies' group together to achieve economies of scale, joint purchasing, or pooled investment, thereby enhancing their market and business capacity.

The Importance of Cooperativism for the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) Movement

Cooperativism is a powerful tool for the SSE because it enables the operation of organizations based on cooperation, democracy, and solidarity, which promote social well-being and sustainable development. Furthermore, it offers a

management framework that allows members to participate in decision-making, control their finances, and distribute benefits fairly, aligning with the principles of the SSE.

Cooperatives allow people to take control of their future finances, and because they are not owned by shareholders, the economic and social benefits of their activity remain in the communities where they are established. Profits generated are reinvested in the enterprise or returned to the members.

Solidarity cooperatives typically include three basic membership categories: users of the service provided by the cooperative organization, employees of the cooperative, and increasingly, individuals and organizations that join as supporting members willing to share the organization's social and solidarity-based objectives.

Cooperative regulations may vary from country to country. In most International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) cooperatives, two-thirds of the board seats must be held by cooperative members who are users, workers, or a combination of both, while the remaining third is filled by supporting members and external members, who are sometimes permitted to serve.

Cooperatives are usually required to reinvest at least a portion of their net surplus in indivisible reserves owned by the organization.

Generally, the compensation paid to members for their contributions retains its "cooperative capital system" character through the allocation of preferred shares, which receive fixed dividends (almost always at a rate capped at the average interest rate paid by private bonds) before any remaining surplus is distributed among beneficiaries of artistic, cultural, or scientific sponsorships, and among worker-members according to their hours worked or wages earned.

These organizations typically apply the cooperative principle of one member, one vote. However, there is usually some flexibility in the distribution of voting power among member groups or colleges, with no single college holding more than 50% or less than 10% of the votes. Sometimes, when one group has very strong participation and another very weak, the Board of Directors may be

formed with representation from only two instead of three types of members.

Member rights are defined as inalienable rights of personal control over participatory and democratic governance. Members vote on the approval of the annual surplus distribution plan recommended by the Board of Directors, but among some cooperatives, the Board is permitted to make this decision independently.

Public Policy on the Practice of Solidarity in Colombia

Public policies on the SSE in each Latin American country have their own model, which, according to Guerra (2014), can be classified into the following three styles or orientations:

1) The traditional style, referring only to the cooperative sector, without mentioning the SSE, followed by countries such as Bolivia, Chile, and Uruguay.
2) The expanded style, which includes cooperativism within the concept of solidarity, as presented by Argentina (1), Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela.
3) The fragmented style, in which Brazil stands out, separates the regulation of cooperative and solidarity-based practices, and more recently, Argentina (2).

In Colombia, Law 79 of 1988 updated the practice of cooperativism as an effective system for achieving socioeconomic development. There, a legal framework is established to promote and protect cooperative organizations, pre-cooperatives, higher-level cooperative bodies, cooperative public administrations, mutual associations, and employee funds.

According to Law 79 of 1988, second-level cooperative bodies and auxiliary cooperative institutions can create third-level associative bodies in order to unify the advocacy and representation of the national and international movement. In accordance with this legislation, the National Confederation of Cooperatives (CONFECOOP, by its Spanish acronym), founded in 1981, acquired its status as a third-level trade association.

Meanwhile, the other foundational law, established by Law 454 of 1998, defines the solidarity economy as a "socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental system comprised of all social forces organized in associative forms, identified with self-managed, solidarity-based, democratic, and humanist practices, operating on a non-profit basis for the integral development of the human being as the subject, actor, and end of the economy." However, the Superintendency of the Solidarity Economy uses the term "solidarity sector" when compiling its statistics. (Cueto, et al., 2018)

According to Law 454 of 1998, the Superintendency of the Solidarity Economy of Colombia (SUPERSOLIDARIA, by its Spanish acronym) was created, under the Ministry of Finance, and is the entity responsible for supervising the financial activity of Civil Enterprise Organizations of the Solidarity Economy (OES). *Supersolidaria* is responsible for removing from its database any OES that have not complied with the periodic reporting requirements. (Garizábal, Otálora, Mugno, 2017)

According to Decree 4122 of 2011, the Special Administrative Unit for Solidarity Organizations (UAEOS, by its Spanish acronym), attached to the Ministry of Labor, is responsible for implementing public policies to strengthen and develop solidarity organizations, and for removing from its database those Solidarity Development Organizations (OSDs) that have not submitted the required periodic reports. (Vivas, González, and Gómez, 2015)

The Organization of Civil Enterprises of the Solidarity Economy (OES) is made up of companies that operate between the interests of the private business sector and those of non-profit or third-sector entities, generally in matters involving associative production organizations to solve "us for us" problems.

In contrast, non-profit organizations (NPOs) are characterized by operating at the intersection of state and third-sector interests, almost always to help other individuals or groups overcome their needs, such as in social, environmental, armed conflict, identity-related, disability, youth, women's, ethnic, and LGBTQ+ issues, among others.

Social workers, governments, philanthropists, and DSOs organize social promotion programs that include training plans to encourage community members to participate in the implementation of community development plans.

In community development, empowerment is the result of a continuous process where individuals and groups gain control over their lives, resources, and decisions, addressing the structural causes of inequality and working towards building a more just and sustainable society. (Olayeye, 2015)

Community participation and social mobilization are essential ingredients for community empowerment. Mobilization seeks to foster change through the involvement of diverse actors in interrelated and complementary efforts.

For its part, community participation is an active process through which beneficiary and client groups influence the direction and execution of the development program to improve their well-being in terms of income, personal growth, self-sufficiency, and other values.

Promoting community participation fosters the emergence of a local response and helps citizens to take ownership of social control approaches and their implementation.

Finally, it is important to note that the Colombian solidarity sector has not been able to unify the three available statistical sources, which leads to confusion regarding the study of its performance. These sources are: the Single Business and Social Registry (RUES, by its Spanish acronym), maintained by the country's Chambers of Commerce, which records the establishment and history of associations and is then used by UAEOS in its performance and management analyses; the information generated by *Supersolidaria* regarding the financial statements of entities required to report to it; and the statistics from Confecoop on trade association matters.

Recent Institutional Dynamics Promoting Solidarity

New policies aimed at developing local communities and territories, prompted

by the need to implement the Peace Accords, have created a favorable environment for the growth of entities in the solidarity sector.

Resolution 2950 of 2020 from the UAEOS adopts the National Plan for the Promotion of the Rural Solidarity and Cooperative Economy (PLANFES, by its Spanish acronym) and stipulates its implementation by coordinating actions with other state entities and following a defined roadmap. This roadmap fosters solidarity practices, promotes the generation of economic resources for personal development, while managers carry out educational activities and the community identifies its capabilities and becomes the protagonist of its own growth.

Based on the initial assessment, the project is implemented over four years and aims to establish an organization or community that has developed across the five components of promoting solidarity practices: creation, promotion, strengthening, development, and integration.

Resolution 464 of 2017 of the UAEOS adopts the strategic guidelines of public policy for Family and Community Peasant Agriculture (ACFC, by its Spanish acronym) and defines the Short Marketing Circuits within which are the Solidarity Peasant Markets and Local Public Purchases

Solidarity Farmers Markets stimulate the local economy in rural areas by selling fresh food products. These products, marketed by rural organizations in the solidarity sector, are delivered to homes, stores, and supermarkets, meeting quality and safety standards within the context of the current economic and health emergency.

Local Public Procurement is governed by Law 2046 of 2020 and UAEOS Resolutions 324 and 248 of 2018, which define: the local purchase of food offered by small-scale agricultural producers and members of the ACFC or other farmers organizations within the geographic area, provided they meet the required health, quality, and safety standards; the members of the Public Procurement Technical Committee; the percentages allocated for purchases; and other related processes.

This is a strategy to stimulate the local economy and the ACFC by providing food, goods, and services from solidarity organizations to the country's public food programs. This strategy comprises the following phases:

- Phase 1: Establishment and operation of the National Technical Committee for the Local Public Procurement Strategy.
- Phase 2: Establishment and operation of the Territorial Technical Committee with government entities and dissemination of the strategy.
- Phase 3: Dissemination of the National Local Public Procurement Strategy to both suppliers (Solidarity Economy Organizations, local producers and businesses) and consumers (operators of the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare, Ministry of Education, Penitentiary and Prison Services Unit, among others), with the participation of entities such as: UAEOS, Special Administrative and Planning Region, INVIMA, ADR, SENA, Chambers of Commerce, Governor's Offices, and Mayors' Offices.
- Phase 4: Organization of local business meetings, such as business matchmaking events, between suppliers and consumers.
- Phase 5: Monitoring of the commercial agreements signed between suppliers and consumers. (UN, 2020).

For its part, Law 2069 of 2020, known as the "Entrepreneurship Law," in addition to promoting business creation and improving the enabling conditions for entrepreneurship, facilitates business formalization, generates improvements in productivity and competitiveness, and transforms cooperatives, employee funds, and mutual associations into MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) as defined in the article.

The enabling environment refers to all those objective and subjective conditions of a political, legal, social, economic, and cultural nature that foster autonomy and the development of their mission objectives.

The Process of Scaling Up the Local Level

Integrated into a mixed economy, and driven by the interest in solving specific problems, communities can generate shared processes that continue the

economic development of the territory.

The logic of production and the market find its basis not only in the mode of production and its territorial manifestations but also in the geophysical conditions of the territory.

Activism is understood as the action undertaken by a group of people, mostly volunteers, striving to change a given reality. The influence of the geographical environment as a meeting point that stimulates collective activism emphasizes the "spatial category," which is useful for studying the political, social, cultural, and historical aspects of collective action. Activism can also be a practice of private entities or organizations seeking to promote certain ideas, exert political or economic pressure, or change existing practices.

Territory can be understood as a specific setting for production, exchange, distribution, and consumption, upon which the economic configuration (vocation, potential, productive base, marginalization or inclusion, among others) of a social formation responds and is based, as an object of its transformation and appropriation.

In this context, the impact of activism in the territory, or the public space of civil society, on spatial reproduction, which is itself also affected, connotes a reciprocal action. Thus, it is said that space is always under construction, never complete, never closed. (Rojas, 2018)

From the territory, individuals and/or organizations emerge, creating their own autonomous spaces that allow them to develop community social power. To advance toward these kinds of practices, communities need to attract individual interest and an organizational process that allows them to unite efforts and build and develop collective initiatives. This is a condition for achieving autonomy in decision-making and for proposing and developing forms of organization and social power, which are what give merit to and justify processes of social and economic empowerment. Ultimately, the territorialization of collective subjects opens the door to the creation of a new world, different from the current one.

To achieve the social power that emanates from civil society, communities must

obtain enabling conditions linked to the exercise of certain institutional mechanisms of direct and indirect democratic control over the economy. These mechanisms facilitate the mobilization of people in favor of voluntary or cooperative collective actions for the transformation of their own communities, and foster counterpublics to counteract the power opposed to social empowerment within spaces of influence over economic and state power.

Being enabled (or empowered) means not being prevented from participating in society by exclusionary or discriminatory institutions and practices and being able to act in accordance with one's own objectives and preferences.

As can be discerned from the case studies presented as appendices at the end of this work, an enabling condition (empowerment) can be fostered by eliminating exclusionary restrictions, providing equal access to opportunities, and implementing proactive affirmative action policies.

V – OTHER ECONOMIC FORMS WITH A SOCIAL PURPOSE DIFFERENT FROM THE "SSE"

The Concept of Non-Profit, the Social Sector, or the Non-Profit Sector

The concept of the Non-Profit Sector, or Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs), emerged in the United States in the 1980s to refer to private organizations that, by virtue of their founding rules, cannot distribute profits to the people who created, control, or finance them. Instead, these profits must be used to fulfill their social mission.

Each country has its own regulatory framework for the non-profit sector; however, the most widespread criterion is that they must be financed primarily (more than 50%) by voluntary donations from their members and, under no circumstances, may they remunerate volunteer work with their own resources.

In Colombia, the Social Sector comprises: political parties and organizations, religious organizations, and social organizations. These social organizations can be: Foundations, Corporations, and Associations, which specifically take the forms of: Self-Benefit Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

Among the first group mentioned are: Non-Profit Entities (NPOs) organized by: unions, parent-teacher associations, community action boards, homeowners' associations, alumni associations, pension funds, employee funds, trade associations, cooperatives, and social and sports clubs. (Pérez, Arango, and Sepúlveda, 2011)

Among NGOs, there are those focused on: Self-development, similar to self-benefit organizations; Development, oriented towards community development

and the provision of services such as charity, assistance, education, development, housing, and health, among others; and those that support government action, which provide complementary services or supplement the State's actions in those same essential aspects for the population; and those that represent and coordinate institutions, which group together the various types of NGOs.

In contemporary practice, the term "social" is frequently used to refer to activities carried out by for-profit companies that promote social impacts such as sustainability, corporate philanthropy, or community investment initiatives. These are more representative of transformative economic practices that, while they may contain transitional social purposes, point in the direction of other economic forms organized by the principle of capital accumulation. (Hall and O'Dwyer, 2017)

The European social economy is understood to be composed of two main subsectors: the market sector and the so-called non-market subsector. The market, or business, subsector of the social economy is primarily made up of cooperatives, mutual benefit societies and mutual insurance companies, business groups controlled by social economy entities and other similar enterprises, and certain non-profit institutions serving social economy enterprises. They are created primarily to meet the needs of their members, who are also users of the activities.

The non-market subsector of the social economy comprises formally established enterprises with decision-making autonomy—that is, independence from their sponsors or financiers—that supply most of their output free of charge or at economically insignificant prices. The beneficiaries of these services are exclusively the users, meaning that any surplus generated cannot be appropriated by the economic agents who create, control, or finance them. Excluded from this group are enterprises or business associations financed through voluntary parafiscal contributions in exchange for services provided. (Monzón and Chaves, 2016)

The main characteristic of a European social economy is that it essentially operates under self-management and may occasionally receive subsidies,

donations, and volunteer work. True ESS, regardless of their organizational form, will never have surpluses to distribute among their members, nor will they need to produce or generate financial returns to fulfill their social mission.

In the European social economy approach, organizations' primary objective is to serve individuals or other social economy organizations. Often, non-profit businesses that do not adhere to the cooperative principle of democratic organization are accepted for inclusion if they justify their social utility through the free provision of goods or services to individuals and families.

This also applies to market producers financed by financial institutions or operating through trusts to provide free cultural, recreational, social, and other services to individuals.

Generally, entities that do not meet the democratic criteria will not be considered part of the SSE, even if they provide services free of charge or at cost, as is the case with certain hospitals, educational, cultural, or artistic institutions. Nor will volunteer organizations that provide non-market services to individuals or families free of charge or at negligible prices.

For the SSE movement, organizations that advocate for human rights and environmental protection, such as Amnesty International or Greenpeace, as well as traditional NGOs, are not necessarily considered part of the social economy unless they undertake economic activities with a social purpose that are democratically managed.

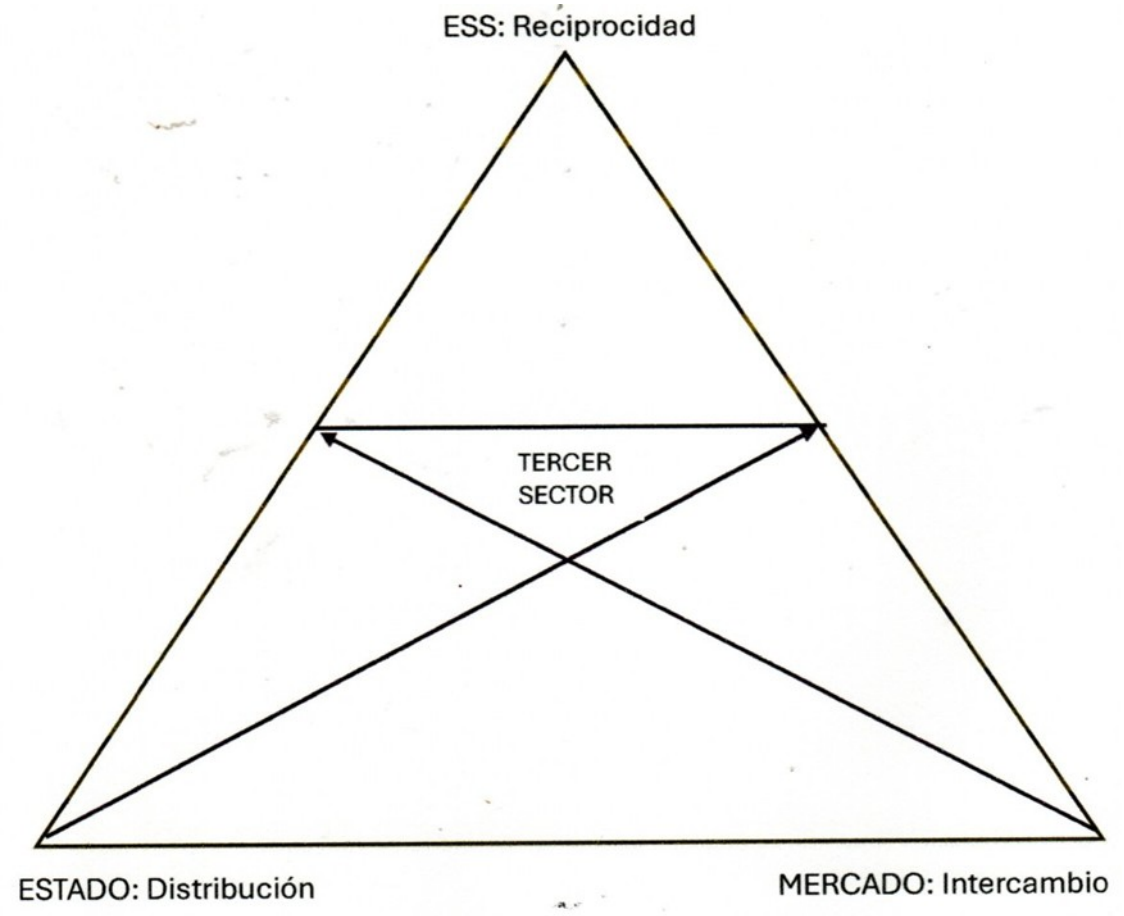
In the English-speaking world, the Third Sector is the term used to describe a kind of meeting point, which in this context corresponds to the private non-profit sector. As mentioned, if most NGOs and so-called Social Enterprises need to generate profits to fulfill their social mission, they cannot, in this context, be classified together in a single non-profit sector (the Third Sector).

A dynamic and complementary representation of the Third Sector in this local context is shown in the following triangular diagram. At each vertex are presented the three principles or pillars of the substantive economy (reciprocity, exchange, and distribution) with their main agents (SSE, Market, and State).

The sides of the triangle are bisected by two transversal lines that, between them, delimit the spaces of mixed economies, of which the SSE can be one of the components: private to the right and public to the left.

The upper area represents the actions of self-managed SSE.

Figure 1: The Third Sector: A Meeting Place



SOURCE: This research

The local Third Sector is represented by the central triangle, where non-profit organizations and NGOs that rely on donations and volunteer work are found, with their diverse positions regarding the community. Between the Third Sector and the market are some cooperative enterprises, NGOs, and social enterprises that operate in the market seeking profit, partially returning capital, although

their decision-making power is distributed equally among the members. Between the Third Sector and the State are represented social enterprises of a public nature and parastatal organizations dedicated to the provision of public services.

The United Nations defines NGOs as: “non-profit, voluntary organizations of citizens, national or international.” The World Bank, for its part, defines them as “private organizations dedicated to alleviating suffering, promoting the interests of the poor, protecting the environment, providing essential social services, or fostering community development” (cited by Pérez, Arango, and Sepúlveda, 2011).

Similarly, the World Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (WANGO) distinguishes NGOs from other organizations by their independence from the direct control of any government and by their objective of not forming political parties, thus defining them as independent voluntary associations.

NGOs have emerged from citizen initiatives, as well as from the actions of progressive religious, political, and social forces, which pursue the mission of serving as watchdogs of the State, advocating for new laws that benefit the community, and promoting two essential elements of democracy: accountability and citizen participation.

In practice, some NGOs, organized as Support or Service Foundations, are businesses established by individuals external to the affected population, operating in the free market and sustained with private resources.

These NGOs, depending on their level of integration into the daily lives of their beneficiaries, seek to directly promote community development campaigns or indirectly support other organizations. Sometimes, to avoid having to distribute any profits among their members, they are forced to hold their assets in trust, while simultaneously operating in a democratic manner and being accountable to their stakeholders and the community at large.

When business activities are carried out through the trust, the trustee is responsible for determining the taxable income, distributing the share

certificates, offsetting the tax loss from the activities against the taxable profits of subsequent fiscal years, and filing the provisional tax payments. Trusts are commonly used to preserve assets for one or more beneficiaries and can offer significant protection and inheritance tax benefits.

Until the end of the last century, NGOs relied on bequests and inheritances from wealthy and charitable individuals to sustain their endowments, generating substantial returns for their operations. Today, low interest rates, a shift in volunteering towards shorter-term relationships, and the emergence of international cooperation agencies have led to a decline in the effectiveness of NGOs, forcing them to transition to the social enterprise model—a hybrid model somewhere between NGOs (local Third Sector) and the market. (Salas, 2017)

One of the world's most important NGOs is the World Economic Forum (WEF), also known as the Davos Forum, which advocates for a globalized world governed by a coalition of multinational corporations, governments, and selected civil society organizations, rather than traditional democratic structures. It annually brings together leading business figures, international political leaders, as well as select journalists and intellectuals, to analyze the most pressing problems facing the world, including health and the environment, a theme it has explored since 1971.

In general, NGOs are not always welcomed in all societies. Among the most frequent criticisms at the global, national, and local levels are those concerning the size and high salaries of officials, the dubious impact of their projects on poverty reduction in various regions and localities, and accusations that they profit from human pain and suffering to increase fundraising, especially in reference to multinational NGOs operating in developing countries.

The Functional Orientation of the Social Enterprise

In the 1990s, the introduction of the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), understood as the set of social actions and contributions to the well-being of the private sector to the community beyond its legal obligations, led

various companies and business groups to create self-funded foundations tasked with operating their own social projects and programs, thus defining the business model known as the “Social Enterprise.”

Social enterprises are characterized by an orientation toward achieving explicit goals for the benefit of the community, driven by certain business and collective dynamics. They share decision-making rights with other stakeholders and encourage participatory management that represents users and consumers.

In most countries, the mission of social enterprises must be financed primarily (more than 50%) through commercial activity and, furthermore, must maintain a minimum level of salaried employment. Public funding received should not exceed half of their equity.

The origin of social enterprises reveals much about their functional orientation. On the American side, social enterprises, organized as foundations and associations to carry out a social mission, were created in the 1980s as a response by private entrepreneurs to the reduction of state subsidies and private donations. Their aim was to generate commercial income to finance charitable and philanthropic activities, both directly and through other non-profit social action organizations. (Perez, Etxezarreta, and Guridi, 2009)

Under the social innovation approach developed in North America, the figure of the social entrepreneur is elevated, along with the impact of the results of "businesses with social objectives," becoming a key functional factor. This comprehensive perspective emphasizes the conditions that facilitate the emergence and success of individual entrepreneurial action, at the expense of ownership and the sector in which it operates.

Behind marketing and business strategies such as social responsibility and innovation, there may be an implicit interest in appropriating certain social characteristics to improve the private sector's image and the state's public face.

In Europe, especially since the mid-1990s, the first social enterprises emerged from the cooperative tradition to provide "reintegration services," helping to resolve problems of structural unemployment and support groups with

employment difficulties, as well as providing other social services to groups at risk of social exclusion, through the exercise of diverse productive activities.

In some countries, specific legal structures have been developed for Social Enterprises, such as in the United Kingdom with "Community Interest Companies," in France with "Cooperative Societies of Collective Interest" (*Société coopérative d'interêt collectif*), in Belgium with "Social Purpose Enterprises" (*Société à finalitéy sociale or Vennootschap met social oogmerk*), and in Italy with the pioneering "Social Cooperatives" (*Cooperative sociali*).

Successive Labour governments in the United Kingdom, under the banner of "regenerating" public policies and making Social Enterprise a central player, launched their development strategy called "the Third Way." Since 2002, the Department for Trade and Industry (DTI) has incorporated Community Interest Companies under the title: "Social Enterprises: A Strategy for Success." (Perez, Etxezarreta and Guridi, 2009)

The European Commission defines social enterprises as: "An agent of the social economy whose main objective is to have a social impact, rather than generating profits for its owners or members. It operates in the market, providing goods and services in a businesslike and innovative manner, and uses its surpluses primarily for social purposes. It is subject to responsible and transparent management, through the involvement of its employees, customers, and stakeholders" (European Commission, COM/2011/0682, 25 October 2011).

As stated, the "Social Economy" as a component of the SSE should be understood as a "collective enterprise," under a broad concept that could encompass different approaches such as cooperatives, non-profit organizations, and producer associations, among others, but always within the democratic governance framework characteristic of SSE and SSEE Organizations (SSEEO). The key and shared defining element is social ownership, by people and not by capital.

However, for more than half a century, "enterprises" such as cooperatively organized daycare centers, cultural organizations like theaters, and other service organizations have emerged that, while they may be commercial ventures,

emphasize their social character.

There are many ambiguities surrounding terms like “social entrepreneurship,” “social enterprise,” and “social economy,” which are often used interchangeably instead of the term Social Entrepreneurship.

In the English-speaking world, human rights and environmental organizations, such as Amnesty International and Greenpeace, as well as traditional NGOs, are considered part of the social economy and are included under the umbrella term “Third Sector.”

However, for the SSE movement, it is not enough for an organization to simply be part of the social economy or a “Third Sector.” In addition to engaging in economic activities with a social purpose, it must also be democratically managed.

Of course, many social entrepreneurs involved in poverty alleviation support job creation for people with disabilities, women's entrepreneurship, and many other activities that often benefit communities. However, the problem arises because some people seem to understand the "Social Economy" solely in terms of its social purpose.

Following reverse logic, only some so-called "social enterprises" can be considered part of the SSE to the extent that they meet all the criteria of the definition. In other words, some social enterprises are part of the SSE, while others are not. (Poirier, 2024)

“Depending on the country in which a social enterprise exists, it can take various legal forms, such as a mutual organization, a benefit corporation, a community interest company, a company limited by guarantee, a charitable organization, a business, a for-profit company, or other more conventional structures.

It is precisely this diversity of options among which a social enterprise can be presented that explains the need to review all the criteria that universally define a SSE, established in 2022 and 2023, to determine which social enterprises can

be part of the SSE.

Social entrepreneurs are businesspeople who use their businesses to create social value. These benefactors are not part of the public sector; on the contrary, they represent a growing segment of the private sector population. Furthermore, their businesses address social problems or needs that exist in the world around them; however, generating profits is of equal or even greater importance to them".

Several studies attempt to characterize social entrepreneurs using the following characteristics:

- Its emphasis on individual, visionary, pragmatic leaders, rather than on organizations.
- Its conception of a social entrepreneur as someone who seeks innovative solutions to problems and leads social innovation processes.
- Its emphasis on replicability and large-scale impact.
- The idea that social entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurship processes can occur in any sector and under any organizational form, and therefore, also in the private sector (conventional businesses) and the public sector. (Perez et al., 2009)

It is a fact that there are marked differences between the role of Social Entrepreneurship and that of the SSE movement in addressing the underlying causes of poverty, inequality, and exclusion.

Essentially, the room for maneuver of social entrepreneurs to address the most fundamental root causes of poverty, inequality, exclusion, and environmental degradation can be hampered by their heavy reliance on funding from commercial activity.

Furthermore, how can the Social Economy demand that the Corporate Leadership Council of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the SSE (UNTFSSE) allow them to be observers without being part of the SSE? How can they support the SSE movement while being involved in the Global Partnership for Social Entrepreneurship, and the Partnership itself?

It would seem to be an attempt to change the fundamental nature of the differences between what the Social Economy and the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) truly are. It should not be forgotten that: The purpose of the SSE is not to alleviate poverty, but to eradicate it!

The crux of the problem lies in the fact that in social entrepreneurship, governance is based on a "shareholder" model, and this shapes how power is exercised. While this might sometimes appear as a form of "collective ownership," it is far removed from the vision of democracy that characterizes the SSE movement.

The impression this leaves is that the expression "social economy" is understood and used as a synonym for "social entrepreneurship," and this is incorrect because the social economy is not only about social purpose, but also about social ownership. (Poirier, 2024)

Ashoka was the first social entrepreneurship initiative, founded in 1980 in the United States, created to identify and support the world's leading social entrepreneurs. “Bill Drayton founded Ashoka in 1980 based on the idea that the most powerful force for good in the world is a Social Entrepreneur: a person driven by an innovative idea who can help correct a deeply rooted global problem.

This was followed by the Schwab Foundation, founded in 1998 by Hilda and Klaus Schwab, executive chair of the World Economic Forum, which had been established in 1971 and meets annually in Davos. The Foundation partnered with the Forum to develop a new service model for the most vulnerable and marginalized populations in society, using business principles and applying best practices from the private sector.

Then came the Skoll Foundation, a private foundation based in Palo Alto, California, established by Jeffrey Skoll in 1999 to provide grants and investments aimed at poverty reduction. An explicit objective of the Skoll Foundation is to support a global transition to a new economic paradigm that centers the needs of all stakeholders (people and the planet) and adopts A long-term vision to provide economic well-being for all.

This is why people in the SSE movement often emphasize the importance of Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN General Assembly in Paris on December 10, 1948 (General Assembly resolution 217 A). Article 25.1 states:

"Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."

The Balance Between Individual and Collective Human Rights

In January 2020, social entrepreneurship was revived once again with the creation of the Catalyst 2030 movement by social entrepreneurs and innovators, responding to the global call to action for people and the planet. This movement was co-founded by a diverse group of social entrepreneurs, many of whom belong to Ashoka, the Schwab Foundation, the Skoll Foundation, and Echoing Green.

That same year, in April 2020, the Global Alliance for Social Entrepreneurship was also created, co-founded by the Schwab Foundation, Ashoka, the Skoll Foundation, the Gerald and Henrietta Rauenhorst Foundation (GHR Foundation), and Yunus Social Business. This Global Alliance now has more than 100 members, including large multinational corporations such as Microsoft, Ikea, and many others, supporting approximately 100,000 social entrepreneurs worldwide.

Again, in 2021, the Schwab Foundation applied for observer status at the UNTFSSE. Meanwhile, at the side event co-organized by France and the UNTFSSE on December 13, 2022, in New York, there were four or five interventions claiming that social entrepreneurs constitute the "core of the SSE." At the same time, SSE observer organizations insisted that these claims did not correspond to the definition of SSE that the UNTFSSE had adopted in its

previous position papers.

Catalyst2030 made a revealing statement on the topic of the side event in New York: “Rana Dajani of the Catalyst 2030 Governing Council emphasized that Catalyst 2030 is creating a multi-stakeholder ecosystem at the national level with leaders at the cutting edge to alleviate poverty and promote prosperity.”

Since members and observers of the Social Entrepreneurship movement's intentions were much more aware than in 2020, during a meeting between UNTFSSE and the Schwab Foundation, an agreement was reached that the Schwab Foundation would not become an observer, but rather a collaborator.

The SSE event, co-organized by UNTFSSE, RIPESS, and others at the Eighth Multi-Stakeholder Meeting of the UN Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs on May 2, 2023, emphasized the need to ensure that “social innovation (social entrepreneurship) is understood as a collective (and not individual) transformational agenda that addresses the root systemic causes of social and ecological crises.”

While the WSF/Schwab 2020 document entitled “Liberating the social economy towards an inclusive and resilient society” mentions the adoption of the UN Resolution on SSE, the introduction to the letter from the Corporate Leadership Council of the Global Alliance for Social Entrepreneurship published in September 2023, emphasizes only the “social” economy, omitting the “solidarity” part of the SSE.

No one knows whether the omission of the SSE is intentional, reflecting a desire to support or not support all aspects of the SSE. In any case, this would contradict the very essence of the SSE movement, where solidarity is key to leaving no one behind, a principle that aligns with the main tenet of the 2030 Agenda. (Poirier, 2024)
The SSE movement has a longer-term vision of attempting to alter the fundamental drivers of the unsustainable, corporate-led global economic system, which has always been the primary motivation for initiating the global SSE movement since the mid- to late-1990s.

This also requires systemic macro-level changes, such as the measures proposed by Oxfam International in the lead-up to the 2024 World Economic Forum (WEF). These include improving public services, regulating businesses, legislating on living wages, limiting CEO pay, and implementing new taxes on the super-rich and corporations, including permanent wealth and excess profit taxes, as well as democratizing corporate governance.

If some businesses, or even a group of businesses, are willing to support the SSE, related measures, principles, and safeguards can be established to prevent corporate co-optation. The issue is that, in the absence of such safeguards, SSE economic organizations always risk being harmed by losing their fundamental missions if those who provide the capital dictate the terms of the agreements.

We can agree on defending fundamental individual human rights, but it remains to be seen whether we can agree that these human rights must be balanced with collective human rights.

Will it be possible to reach an agreement on the need to balance individual human rights with collective human rights? In other words, could we believe it's possible to find a balance between the right to individual property and the right to collective ownership of goods (whether at the corporate or public level), including "Common Goods" (which in no way imply state ownership)?

Common Goods (such as forests, fishing grounds, irrigation canals, among others) imply the right of all members of the community to their use, without exclusive consumption, but their enjoyment is subject to competition. Therefore, to ensure their sustainability over the foreseeable future, they require democratic management.

This is not the case with the management of Public Goods, which, in the worst-case scenario, could be managed through time slots to regulate access or differential rates based on levels of urgency among users.

In other words, it involves interpreting the correlation between the biophysical and sociocultural conditions that characterize the phenomenon.

Analyzing the phenomenon of scarcity of a Common Good involves studying a natural phenomenon while recognizing, identifying, and analyzing its social dimension. Sometimes, Common Goods suffer from the irrationality of users or collective action, which degrades sustainable development and compromises the potential of future generations.

The term Common Good is closely related to the terms Common Use or Communal Goods or Resources and Public Resources or Goods. Harmonizing the production and consumption of Common Goods and Public Goods, together with a democratic order, also generates an economy of the Common Good.

The Common Good is the result of human interaction simply by virtue of being and living in community. Its values are distinct from those of the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE). Its conceptualization can vary in each community because of the practices and customs existing at each time and place.

What might society's response be to the position of a person who decides not to collaborate in building a common good?

The Common Good Economy

The Common Good Economy (CGE) is an economic model that seeks to redirect the behavior of social actors linked to values such as human dignity, solidarity, ecological sustainability, social justice, participation, and social democracy, broken down by interest groups and the social sphere.

This model, proposed by the Austrian economist Christian Felber (1812), began to be implemented in October 2010 by a group of companies from around the world, formed as a political lobbying movement seeking to enshrine its principles in the laws of each country. For institutions to be able to influence society, it is necessary to foster among their constituents a sense of solidarity and ethics capable of withstanding the subordination of the market to a democratic political logic.

The CGE website itself proposes a transformation of business activity by

initiating a learning process facilitated through an updated score on its Common Good Balance Sheet (CGB), primarily focused on creating sustainability and shared value, which distinguishes it from the IFRS Statement of Financial Position.

The ideal company (one that could achieve a CGB of up to 1,000 points) is one that complies with the CGE principles, while others, without having distributed profits in the most equitable way, could achieve acceptable scores by generating Common Good. According to the assigned classification, companies' products are labeled with a specific color or symbol.

Reducing the ecological footprint will be the objective of individuals, businesses, and nations, striving for a globally sustainable and equitable level. Nature is granted intrinsic value, distinct from that of private property. Agricultural land may be granted free of charge or through payment of a usage fee.

The exact margins for income, distribution, and personal assets will be limited and defined in general assemblies. Decision-making rights and partial personal ownership, starting from a certain number of members, will be progressively transferred to all employees. Transfers and inheritances may not exceed five percent. Any surplus beyond these limits will form part of a management fund or democratic endowment created for future generations. Every tenth year is a sabbatical, self-financed by a fund from the employees themselves.

Financial surpluses from transactions and operations must be used for: socially and environmentally profitable investments, provisions for losses, loan repayments, deposits in limited resources, restricted employee bonuses, and interest-free loans to partner companies. Surpluses will not be used to provide bonuses to individuals who do not work for the company, nor for hostile takeovers of other companies, contributions to political parties, the concentration of power, or the separation of power and responsibility.

In the Economic and Competitiveness Model (ECM), decisions are based on prices, ensuring that social costs and benefits are articulated through democratic processes that legitimize community aspirations and ignore externalities that

conflict with the interests of all parties. The objective is not to correct market failures, but rather to correct the mechanisms and incentives to achieve different results from the market itself.

The redesign of the public sector seeks to have civil society act as the architect and protagonist of public life, co-creating a different type of market. It is the City Council's responsibility to showcase its own BBC to invite the province's business community to join the same process, emphasizing the key issues shaping local development.

The population may be directly represented through regional economic parliaments. Representative democracy will be complemented by direct democracy and participatory democracy. Sovereign citizens must be able to control and correct their representation, amend the constitution, enact laws, and control the infrastructure for water supply, banking, energy, communications, and transportation.

The basic infrastructure consists of economic institutions in the fields of education, health, social action, mobility, energy, banking, and communications, all controlled by citizens. The central bank obtains the excessive right to create money and carries out international capital transactions to prevent tax evasion. The state is financed primarily through interest-free loans from the Central Bank. The Democratic Bank provides guaranteed savings deposits, free checking accounts, low-interest loans, and risk loans with social and ecological capital gains.

VI – ECONOMIC FORMS, SOURCES AND COMPLEMENTARIES OF THE SSE

Andean Rationality

In Andean rationality, nature—cosmos, order, universe, world—is a subject. It is a living totality, without representing a closed system as a category. Nature is sacred, and pacts with it are renewed through ritual. For the indigenous world, reality is presented symbolically through worship and ceremony, in which one acts as a kind of search for actualization and reintegration into reality itself.

All beings in nature are invested in energy and, consequently, are living beings. For example, the earth is not an inert object upon which one works, but a living and present symbol of the circle of life, of fertility, and of the retribution of ethical cosmic order. A stone, a river, a mountain, the sun, plants—in short, all beings have life, and they too enjoy a family, joys, and sorrows, just like human beings.

In this sense, it is a biocentrism or a holistic ecocentrism, in which vital flows circulate and invigorate everything. This means that one cannot speak abstractly

of a human being and nature, but rather of the human being in and with nature, since humans exchange energy with all living beings linked by the animistic and energetic bond of the cosmos. (Pachón, 2019)

Without major differences from other Latin American authors, Aníbal Quijano (2007), for whom reciprocity should be understood as "…a reciprocity that re-emerges and re-expands…", does not offer an explicit definition of reciprocity, but rather uses it as an analytical category representing a form of social and cultural interrelation based on collaboration, solidarity, and mutual care.

This categorization is the closest to the concept of alter-bioeconomy, a kind of biocentrism applicable to all dimensions or spheres of life, capable of promoting:

1) The organization of production, exchange or distribution, and reproduction.
2) The structuring of collective authority associated with the community.
3) Social equality of individuals within the diversity and heterogeneity of individual and collective identities.
4) Horizontal relationships among individuals of all identities, beginning with differences between sexes and sexualities.
5) Relationships of use and reproduction with other living beings.
6) A culture of shared responsibility for the existence of the universe.

The interrelationship of the whole is the contribution of Andean cultures to humanity. Interrelationship is existence. From this principle, three other sub-principles emerge:

1) The sub-principle of Correspondence: in which the fields or regions of reality correspond harmoniously.
2) The sub-principle of Complementarity: in which everything always has an existential complement with which it forms a complete or whole element.
3) The sub-principle of Reciprocity: in every type of interaction, whether interhuman, between human beings and nature, or between human beings and divinity, there is a regular and prompt exchange of what is received. (Pachón, 2019)

Knowledge is the result of lived experience grounded in the argument of authority, antiquity, frequency, coherence, and order. Work and production are collective acts of celebration (work and collective celebration are inseparable), just as the enjoyment of well-being and the management of resources that enable the reproduction of life are collective. The principles of this collective fulfillment are:

1) Social solidarity, based on the premise that human beings can only achieve this fulfillment with their fellow human beings, that is, in community.
2) Production is the result of the interaction of collaborative work within a framework of respect and harmony with nature.
3) Complementarity, amidst human interdependence among beings who are different; who also have different capacities and attributes, which enriches interaction and is the basis of shared learning.
4) Productive management is a responsibility for family and collective reproduction, which implies political management and public responsibility. (Ascarrunz, 2011)

Scarcity in primitive societies is a relative, not an absolute, notion, since it does not involve choice or the insufficiency of resources. In these primitive societies, only two types of transactions exist: reciprocal exchanges, also called vice versa, and centralized exchanges, which encompass the movement of goods between the national or territorial redistribution of collectively obtained resources and the family or household unit.

Trade and bargaining in primitive society are occasional and not part of the social fabric. Thus, when an exchange does occur, prices are set not through competition but through the diplomatic valuation of the economic good, appropriate for resolving a potential conflict between strangers. (Díaz, 1992)

Buen Vivir (Pachón, 2019) or *Vivir Bien* (Ascarrunz, 2016) in Latin America (Living Good/ Good living, from their English equivalents) is a socioeconomic model inspired by the indigenous ideal of social organization, ensuring harmony among living beings, nutrition in the sense of enjoying the fruits of the harvest, and the fulfillment of the needs of all its members and future generations, thus enabling the expanded reproduction and development of life.

In VB (Good living, from its Spanish acronym), the individual ceases to be central, giving way to coexistence, interaction, and intra- and intercultural dialogue. It is a biocentric and cosmocentric conception that transcends anthropocentrism and incorporates values such as solidarity, mutual support, and cooperation as ways to foster Latin American cosmovitality. (Ascarrunz, 2011)

The ethical sense of VB can be summarized in the following components:

1) Human beings cannot live without being part of a community or living apart from nature.
2) Public management must be guided by ethical and ecological principles and respect for plurality (economic, political, and cultural).
3) Every economic decision must account for the real impacts caused on people's lives and on the reproduction of their conditions, within a framework of natural regeneration.

VB prioritizes life, nature, and community, and is committed to cosmic relationality; it is a commitment that rejects all philosophies of history and, therefore, the notion of progress and development in their Eurocentric and Western versions. Community is the condition of possibility for vital fulfillment, because, above all, human beings are social; they live with others and coexist in necessary mutual relationships.

Solidarity, understood as a “horizontal relationship between people who constitute a group, association, or community, under conditions of equality, is a bond that endures over time and obligates the individuals within the collective, creating responsibilities toward one another.” Contrary to the mobility and successive changes of identity, this utopia is more of an intercultural philosophy. It emphasizes the articulation of communities and their demands, which strengthens their struggles.

Here, there is no solipsism. The harmony of the collective over the individual leads to the appreciation of the community as the sphere of personal fulfillment, without this implying the erasure of the individual and their uniqueness, nor justifying totalitarian positions. A harmonious bridge is built, where there is no

insurmountable contradiction between the individual, their interests, and the interests of the collective. In social life, solidarity prevails over competition and selfishness.

Community economic organization is defined in the Political Constitution of Bolivia (CPB, from its Spanish acronym) as the set of systems of production and reproduction of social life under the principles of the indigenous and peasant peoples and nations (Art. 307).

Critical community thought is based on the idea that the widespread use of the solidarity economy responds to a paternalistic vision of empathy stemming from a logic of compassion and charity, in which others are helped according to their inability to fend for themselves.

Western criticism establishes two aspects that differentiate the form of community economic organization from the solidarity economy: the egalitarian exchange among members of a community is based on concrete mechanisms of reciprocity according to the identifiable social role of its members, and the assumption of the principle of complementarity activated among subjects of social control.

Modernity in Latin America can be understood as a shared experience on the margins of the periphery, where other alternative modernities coexist, or also as the reclamation of a distinct place, beyond Eurocentric, First World, or supremacist fundamentalisms, where different ways of doing economics persist, and where the object of decolonial, post-development, and BV (Living good, from its Spanish acronym) studies emerges.

Practicers and promoters of the SSE systematically attempt to instil in their practices and behaviors a series of ethical, environmental, economic, and cultural values and principles that, at the same time, more closely resemble community-based economies rooted in Indigenous traditions and significantly distance themselves from the logic of capitalist economics and the patriarchal imaginary that sustains it—a condition that profoundly redefines the meaning of "the economic" and imbues the SSE with a sense of "decoloniality."

For the Economy of the Living Good (EBV, from its Spanish acronym), democracy is participation, and institutions respond to the "management" of holistic balance, autonomy, self-governance, and claims of collective identity, among other principles related to social, political, and economic inclusion, and participatory democracy. (Pachón, 2019)

Here, it is necessary for human beings to be in balance with themselves, with other human beings, and with nature. Therefore, this type of economy must be defined in substantive terms, that is, in such a way that the economy is not isolated from society and nature, and sustenance is prioritized over scarcity. (FUBEM, 2016)

The EBV demands an economic system that allows for a life in harmony with oneself, with the rest of society, and with nature. It needs the support of public policies, contracts, and state intervention to guarantee the protection of the social criteria and values adopted in the face of free competition. The combination of public policies tailored to the needs and potential of self-managed development requires structural changes, legal recognition of alternative economic models within the dominant economic system, and a shift from purely representative democracy to a more direct, participatory democracy.

However, this diverse approach to social policy has often been perceived by institutions, organizers, and even the beneficiaries themselves as standard systemic actions aimed at maintaining a sustainable relationship with civil society, thus hindering its transformative capacity. The two main adverse assessments of this economic system have been:

- The accumulation of profits as an end in themselves rather than as a means.
- The responsibility for generating inequality among the population, causing financial instability and ecological unsustainability.

In the BV/VB (Living Good/ Good living, from their Spanish acronym) Latin-American socioeconomical model, the principle of sufficiency, which community members must adhere to, imposes restrictions on excessive material accumulation that jeopardizes the rights of nature (harmony with nature).

Furthermore, when significant income and wealth inequalities affect community life (social harmony), community members also limit the inequalities that disrupt this harmony. Thus, having or not having in excess, and damaging or not damaging the ecosystem, cannot be treated as separate problems.

Through the principle of sufficiency, the BV/VB limits wealth creation: it involves obtaining from nature only what is necessary for subsistence. This requires living a simple life, without excessive material accumulation that jeopardizes the rights of nature. In this way, in an ecologically sustainable economy, the economic processes of production, distribution, circulation, and consumption would be subject to the planet's biophysical limits. (FUBEM, 2016)

The BV/VB does not base social well-being on the exploitation of some by others, nor on the exclusion of ethnic groups or vulnerable populations. The accumulation of wealth and industrialization are presented as means to establish a harmonious coexistence among communities and between communities and nature. (Ascarrunz, 2011)

The transformation from a market society (capitalist society) to a BV (Living good from its Spanish acronym) society implies the adoption of a set of policies and institutions that set limits (decommodify) the treatment of labor, nature, and money as commodities. This would consequently limit self-regulating markets in their functions of resource allocation and price creation, democratically subordinating them to society.

But it also includes the preservation and promotion of other forms of integration such as reciprocity and solidarity-based redistribution. In short, the BV/VB requires developing and promoting democratic policies that protect human society and nature from the self-destructive tendencies of the free market. (FUBEM, 2016)

BV/VB, in its consideration of diverse cultural values, is the expression of an alternative rationality. This rationality lacks the concept of progress as

unlimited perfectibility in the future, as well as the notion of development based on economic growth. It does not conceive of a linear life process that establishes a previous and subsequent state—namely, underdevelopment and development—a dichotomy through which people must pass to achieve well-being. (Pachón, 2019)

Thus, the development of an economy for the BV consists of formulating policies that foster the social and democratic construction of forms of integration of the human economy within economic and extra-economic institutions subordinated to maintaining a harmonious balance with nature. (FUBEM, 2016)

The BV/VB recognizes different forms of ownership, including collective ownership, as well as different forms of production. The BV/VB places the economy at the service of life; the economy is simply a means to live, not an end in itself. (Pachón, 2019)

Therefore, in this conception, the economy depends on culture and cultural values, and is not an autonomous, closed field, detached from the complexity of life. Rather, it is an economy of equilibrium, seeking harmony, the satisfaction of basic needs, and the enabling of the exercise of freedoms, capabilities, and the enjoyment of individual and community rights without producing any kind of domination over others. The goal is the production, reproduction, and enhancement of life—that is, cosmovitality.

The BV/VB, in its state-level character and dimension, is an articulator for decision-making, serving as a support for planning, monitoring, and evaluation of the impacts of public management. (Ascarrunz, 2011)

The normative orientation and intellectual development of LatAm thought

For its part, the normative community orientation imposed on Latin American peoples since the colonial period can still be observed in the cultural norms of certain communities, whether Indigenous, Afro-descendant, or mixed, but also in a set of collective practices of economic production, consumption, and

mutual aid among subsistence farmers in areas of intensive agriculture, and among "the poor" excluded from the dominant economy.

These social dynamics and adopted economic survival strategies constitute interesting objects of sociological study due to their emancipatory potential among certain population groups, such as the "*tequio*" and "*mano vuelta*" in Mexico, the "*minga*" and "*palenque*" in Colombia, and the "*quilombola*" in Brazil.

In the second half of the 20th century, a movement of critical philosophy emerged within Latin American intellectual circles, primarily rooted in the legacy of the Spanish conquest and colonization. This movement advocated liberation from oppression and the construction of a more just and egalitarian society.

Among its leading thinkers were Enrique Dussel (1934-2023), Leopoldo Zea (1912-2004), Paulo Freire (1921-1997), and later, activists in Liberation Theology, who promoted the formation of an authentic Latin American identity and the construction of a new ethics and social praxis.

In its holistic nature, Latin American identity represents a historical symbiosis sustained by its significant Spanish, Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and peasant heritage. However, because it was not preceded by a kind of mental emancipation […], the aspirations of the Creole groups that led the independence processes imposed upon themselves states in which mestizo identity was segregated, always privileging those with lighter skin.

Centuries later, despite such political emancipation, which could be considered a failure, Latin American resilience continues to demonstrate that this is an advantage for constructing a complex, self-emerging way of thinking through the reconciliation of the expressions of what is now known as Western culture.

Critics of the humanist perspective on development, while grounded in a modernist heritage that tends to conceptualize entities in terms of objects (essentialist) rather than processes or relationships, argue that the humanist approach leads in practice to conceptual "blind spots" that prevent them from

identifying the circumstances in which the least favored groups in society become:

1) Invisible, due to their amalgamation with universal categories. This would be the case, for example, in Kant's view, of having to replace the image of “citizen” with that of a “human being” who transforms the impulse to care for others into mere chores.
2) Silenced, due to the manipulation of perceptions in a strategic discourse. This is the case with the idealization of certain normative paths through notions such as progress, modernity, and evolution, among others, which are presented as having been fulfilled by certain sectors.

For the cultural expressions generated in Latin American societies to become markers of identity, the consolidation of interculturality is necessary to establish an inclusive and holistic Latin American way of thinking that recognizes Indigenous, Afro-descendant, mestizo, and other heritages, and that questions the system by which society operates.

Latin American thinkers must aim to consolidate a social and cultural revolution that transforms everything from broad aspects such as the organization of society to more specific ones such as the identity of the Latin American subject. (Salazar, 2019)

Now, regarding external factors, Latin American NGOs and Social Enterprises offering Technology for Social Inclusion have had to adapt their "appropriate technologies" to forms of collective ownership of the means of production and progressively integrate them into their policies on housing, clean energy, water provision and purification, food production, and other areas.

In Latin America, to date, scientific research has not focused on innovating solutions to its social needs. Therefore, it has fallen to Civil Society Enterprises, NGOs, and Social Enterprises to develop Conventional Technology (CT) internally through operational control of their self-managed work processes.

Tait and Dagnino (2013), drawing on Felix-Das Neves (2012), argue that these Social Enterprises offering Technology for Social Inclusion in Latin America have not yet moved beyond Conventional Technology, remaining within it by

following one of the following modalities:

1) If they can control how the results of the production process are distributed.
2) If collective ownership of the means of production is predominant.
3) If there is an opportunity to revitalize or upgrade machinery and equipment to increase their lifespan.

Technological Innovation

Innovation refers to a change in how a problem is addressed and how needs are met more effectively than existing solutions. Innovations can be technological or social, depending on the "ways of doing things," that is, with or without the participation of the community in which they are implemented.

Technological innovation is embedded in the market economy; its focus is on individual interests, seeking to generate value through novelty and social purpose. These innovative environments emerge from the meso-economic level through the articulation and dissemination of productive development based on the agglomeration and conjunction of public, private, and academic actors, coordinated and dynamic in driving demand. These environments can be analyzed using the approach of innovation environments or systems.

According to Bouchard (2013), innovations understood from this perspective can materialize in different areas of social activity, including:

1) Production relations: the design of new forms of work organization with worker participation, and through experiences of self-managed enterprises, among others
2) Consumer relations: through user participation in the co-production of services, the co-creation of new programs and rules, responsible consumption, responsible tourism and leisure, among others.
3) Inter-firm relations: cooperation and competition, non-market interdependencies (externalities), corporate social responsibility, among others.
4) The spatial configuration of social relations: new forms of governance, community economic development, etc.

Social innovation signifies a break in the way things are done, an "innovative" element in a given context. Innovative in the sense of incorporating new ideas, new concepts, new products and services, new methodologies for problem-solving and solution-finding, and new forms of evaluation.

The Technological Innovation System (TIS) is a concept more related to flows of knowledge and competition than to flows of goods and services. Starting with an entrepreneur and a critical mass of actors and institutions organized into dynamic networks of knowledge and competition within an industry or group of industries, development blocs—synergistic clusters of companies and technologies—can emerge.

Thus, a Technology Innovation System (TIS) can be defined as “a dynamic network of agents interacting in a specific economic-industrial area under a particular institutional infrastructure dedicated to the generation, dissemination, and use of technology.”

The analysis of an TIS can encompass at least three levels of examination: the field of knowledge in terms of the structures and processes that support or hinder it; a process or artifact in terms of the creation of new business or exploitation opportunities; or a set of products or artifacts in terms of their effectiveness in the development and dissemination of entrepreneurial activity, which must be built over time.

However, the logic of the capitalist market is not geared toward solving chronic social problems related to food, health, education, environmental issues, asymmetries in access to information and cultural goods, among others.

Part of the problem is that this “neoclassical myopia,” which prioritizes business relationships over all other economic and social relationships, tends to neglect the processes of constitution and evolution of this public sphere, and the socio-technical relationships it entails.

Due to its questioning nature regarding the ways of doing things and its diverse methods of implementing strategies, social innovation, coupled with the support of social movements, is believed to be a powerful tool for providing participants

with less dependence and greater autonomy.

Going a step further, governments can organize their tax systems to increase investment in Research and Development (R&D), and/or focus their economic resources on certain sectors to make them more competitive, where scientific research oriented toward technological development for production and commercialization serves as the foundation of such public policy, helping determine what to promote and where to invest.

- The first challenge in scientific and technological research concerns the cognitive, constructive, and conceptual framework for developing new methodological approaches, practices, logics, and strategies used to expand existing production processes and incorporate new ones, all within the framework of good living, social welfare, decommodification, self-management, and solidarity.
- The second challenge involves identifying, analyzing, and recording consumption patterns among both the population within the production sector and those outside its market, in order to synchronize practical and political action and integrate their respective buying and selling niches for inputs, services, and finished goods, corresponding to their ventures and plans for expanding production processes.

Social Technology

Since the 1980s, studies on technological innovation systems had established that, in addition to individual companies and research institutes as determinants of technological change, the influence of social structures was emerging and becoming increasingly integrated.

Dagnino (2010) defines Social Technology as: “the result of:

- The cooperative or collaborative action of producers in a work process.
- Under a system of association legitimized by social agreement based on the socioeconomic context generated by the collective ownership of the means of production.
- Giving rise to self-managed control, voluntary and participatory

> cooperation, and appropriable modification of the product according to the collective's decision, within a productive environment."

Thus, Social Technology emerges as a process of socio-technical adaptation in which different socio-technical phenomena are integrated, such as: problem-solution relationships, working-not-working relationships, or frameworks, dynamics, technological resignifications, among others, linked to the cumulative resolution of small problems, and to a lesser extent to the generation of capacities for solving systemic problems.

This concept of socio-technical adaptation allows us to understand the processes of technology production as self-organized and interactive processes of integrating knowledge, artifacts, or technological systems within a socio-technical dynamic or trajectory, socio-historically situated.

The analysis of public policies for Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) essentially stems from a microeconomic approach, since the intervention mechanisms employed by the State aim to provide incentives (primarily economic) that promote this activity from the perspective of the stakeholders.

This can be achieved through:

- Support for innovative activities in companies and universities through subsidies and research loans, public procurement of local technology, training of researchers, and dissemination of knowledge.
- State participation in research and development activities through universities and research centers.
- Creating institutional frameworks to foster participation in innovative activities through regulatory instruments that generate certainty (intellectual property, for example).

It is necessary that, to promote such strategies, the endogenous capacities of the territories be considered first, such as their specific resources and assets, local actors, production systems, and social cooperation networks, as well as the strengthening of institutions that generate certainty and allow society to be articulated within a territory, through functional networks that generate shared synergies based on solidarity and mutual trust among the actors.

It is considered that for the change in a society's production matrix to be inclusive, it is necessary to improve the productivity conditions of the ventures that could successfully link with the import substitution process, the diversification of suppliers for local public procurement, and a greater presence in value chains where their participation is relevant, such as in food sovereignty and tourism.

It is worth mentioning here the "integrated dual model" followed in the countries of Good Living in Latin America, in which the Government assumes a key role as a builder of consensus and proactive facilitator of a strategy based on its two components of natural resources and the gradual improvement of the export profile through continuous innovations in products, processes and auxiliary activities, especially with the vision of creating high value niches differentiating them from traditional commodity markets.

The limited availability of medium- and high-skilled personnel, which prevents current process industries from narrowing the gap between rich and poor, eliminating unemployment, and overcoming poverty on their own, has led to the adoption of top-down alliances with global companies to strengthen international competitiveness. Simultaneously, bottom-up efforts are being made to leverage local advantages and production clusters for global or national market niches to improve the well-being of the population involved.

The diversification and transformation of the production structure is the result of a strategic process of constant technological upgrading of resource-based activities and innovations. Both bottom-up and top-down approaches must be accepted by society and ideologically integrated, even though they are promoted by separate institutions.

Interventionist and Transitional Social Innovation

To promote development with social inclusion, it is necessary to reconsider innovation within the territory, designing flexible socio-technical interventions tailored to the strategies and needs of stakeholders, as well as local resources

and existing knowledge.

Designing an innovation policy that is tailored to the local context requires a transition from a vision of NGOs and social enterprises offering Technology for Social Inclusion services, contracted under a vertical subsidiarity model primarily as a public-private partnership agreement, towards a demand-side approach for services provided by the State, as a collaborative contract linked to the local governance spending process, aimed at meeting shared needs and interests.

As is well known, the State or its Territorial Entities may call for the voluntary affiliation of those individuals who, as members, wish to participate in projects, under forms of horizontal subsidiarity such as collaboration agreements.

The essential element of these policies is ensuring sustained investment in order to consolidate and increase scientific and technological capabilities, and thus foster cooperation among stakeholders within an innovation system capable of accumulating learning and skills as a result, on the one hand, of the appropriation of science and, on the other, of the capacity to evaluate new market strategies to address emerging demands.

Interventionist social innovation experiences impact the efficiency of governance with respect to citizen participation. Their efforts are oriented towards:

- Strengthening the civic culture conducive both to the introduction of new ideas and social practices, and to the incorporation of new conceptions regarding resource management and the relationship with the environment, the community, or organizations in each context.
- The development of job skills for a more balanced and horizontal dialogue between the State and civil society, opening spaces for decision-making on public management.
- The strengthening of individuals' sense of identity and belonging to social groups and the community, and the dissemination of social and civic rights.
- The formalization of the social and institutional foundations that make joint initiatives between civil society and the State sustainable in public

management.

- The reduction of dependence on political will in decision-making, through the development of the vulnerability achieved after the modifications requested by the various State stakeholders.

Influencing public management through policies of recognition, incentives, visibility, and learning from experiences of territorial innovation broadens the notion of the local beyond the municipality and state authority and fosters convergence between citizen organizations and the public sector, making "good governance" possible.

An alliance emphasizes the role of artifacts by offering greater control over dynamics and trajectories, problem/solution relationships, the relevance of functioning/non-functioning processes, and greater consideration of the political and strategic aspects of these relationships.

Building socio-technical alliances tailored to the specific territory will not always yield a timely solution to a specific problem, because market-driven principles of scale and efficiency govern the standardization of dominant technological artifacts, processes, and knowledge, rather than prioritizing their compatibility with operational processes.

Similarly, public policies and new intervention models may prove fragile and unstable because, instead of being conceived based on their suitability and sustainability, they have emerged more closely tied to other factors such as funding, or the recognition and validation by local and/or disciplinary regulations.

Sometimes, these factors lead to the discontinuity or reversibility of alliances, hindering the expansion of experiences and resulting in the loss of a valuable accumulation of intervention capacities based on Technologies for Social Inclusion.

Community Empowerment Programs

The practice of empowerment is defined as the process in which actors/stakeholders acquire power and/or decision-making capacity to mobilize resources and institutions in order to achieve certain sustainability objectives.

The community empowerment process can be structured to work with co-construction processes, individually, at the micro level, where the process represents a path toward self-identification and a sense of belonging to a group or community. Alternatively, it can be implemented as a social intervention policy at the macro level, representing the construction of a direction guided by ethical principles that defend freedom, equality, and social justice, advocating for the distribution of power and the affirmation of differences in terms of social alternatives and opportunity structures. (Correa and Neves, 2018)

According to Michel Foucault (1979), an individual position of resistance that confronts local power cannot be considered empowerment because no transformation occurs there, as the source of the conflict is the exercise of power itself and, in no way, human agency.

In this regard, Elisheva Sadan (1997) reaffirms that the validity of empowerment as a new approach (and a new idea) exists only in its implementation at the social level, where empowerment can be interpreted as a new attempt by power/knowledge to control the field of human social phenomena.

And on this point, Foucault warns of the need to be mindful of actions under the different domain of supervision and surveillance exercised by power, which could arise from similar efforts to grant individuals greater control over their lives and destinies, developing new knowledge and organizing it in an institutionalized manner.

Community empowerment depends on the acquisition of skills and access to essential resources. The enabling of an organization, a community, or a collective activity is the hope that, based on a platform of shared values, it will be possible to reach conclusions and change the prevailing policies and practices in social systems.

Social enablement is a demand for recognition of the harm caused to certain populations in the name of shared social values, as a consequence of some of these values having been manipulated against them.

Necessarily, a community empowerment initiative represents an ethical policy project that seeks to guide political actions and decisions through ethical and moral principles.

This type of project focuses on promoting justice, equality, respect for human rights, and the construction of a more equitable society. It implies a commitment to transparency, responsibility, and accountability in the exercise of political power. (Correa and Neves, 2018)

The encounter between a given community and professionals who use professional social innovation (techno-social) methods is not spontaneous; it is generally an agreed-upon event, integrated into a social system. It may have arisen from a planned public or private policy, or from a moral decision to volunteer.

Techno-social professional practice develops intervention methods that can generate changes in people's lives. It fosters and facilitates processes of greater control by individuals and groups over their lives and environments. Social technological innovation does not seek to present itself as a revolution, but as a new social agreement: a social contract.

Commonly, programs that support the transformation toward sustainability are sponsored by the government and third-sector organizations, which often address the specific needs of vulnerable or marginalized groups or communities.

Most of these programs are long-term and, therefore, amidst changes in government policies, may be left unfinished due to a lack of participation from local communities in their design and implementation. (Dushkova, 2024)

Concurrent stigmatization based on nationality, ethnicity, and displacement is enshrined in human rights as an intersectionality. Addressing this intersectionality corresponds to processes of technological innovation aimed at

sustainability, resilience, and economic development. Similarly, changes are conceived to address situations of poverty, inequality, and exclusion that disempower entire populations and require an urgent transition to situations of greater control over their lives.

Powerlessness is a social phenomenon with structural aspects rooted in power relations and disempowering practices originating in social systems. Given that the causes of powerlessness are rooted in social processes, empowerment processes in the context of social (techno-social) innovation seek to influence the capacity for oppressed human action and the social structure, within the limitations and possibilities in which this capacity exists and reacts. (Sadan, 1997)

In a “just society,” there would be no impediments to the equitable distribution of opportunities, which will become increasingly public knowledge as citizens recognize it. It is in this same way that empowerment processes will emerge before becoming the subject of study. (Correa and Neves, 2018)

In addition to overcoming certain exclusionary social practices and institutional discrimination, empowered individuals must be aligned with their own goals and preferences. In such a state of well-being, being empowered would allow them to pursue their chosen goals regarding intangible aspects of life. Empowerment means any action that encourages participation and taking control both in their own community and in society at large. (Haugh and O’Carrol, 2021)

Community participation and empowerment are the main ingredients of innovative social intervention programs, structured to be implemented in a community context with the active collaboration of the target group or groups. Active and conscious participation, which integrates the participants' level of mastery and understanding of the process in which they participate (and in different contexts), will produce emancipatory results.

Participation is the redistribution of power. The capacity to act and exercise power—that is, development and the fight against inequality—are simultaneously a condition and a product of empowerment.

It is a strategy through which individuals who are not currently participating can promote significant social reforms that allow them to share benefits that involve society to a greater extent. (Correa and Neves, 2018)

Depending on the type of results or products sought, an empowerment program can be classified as: personal, economic, political, organizational, community, gender, digital, environmental, and social. These categories often overlap, and many programs may simultaneously configure multiple forms of empowerment.

Community and social empowerment is the most frequent, followed by economic, gender, and personal empowerment. In contrast, digital empowerment is a new phenomenon that is beginning to emerge. Community empowerment tends to promote community participation and inclusion, as well as foster the formation of social capital and the development of networks.

Although there is no single, fixed set of procedures for a community empowerment program, the following structure is common to most programs:

1) Awareness-raising, problem identification, and understanding.
2) Learning, training, and capacity building.
3) Improving community interaction through co-creation (of visions and objectives) and participation. Once communities recognize their agency and acquire the necessary knowledge and skills, co-creation and participation among various stakeholder groups are encouraged, providing them with opportunities to be heard, involving communities (especially those groups that are underrepresented and marginalized) in decision-making processes, and creating platforms for communication and exchange.
4) Co-development of sustainable solutions and management plans for their implementation (sharing objectives and structuring problems and visions in relation to the current system). Some programs included formulating a future vision in this step.
5) Implementation assistance. This generally relates to establishing appropriate management and leadership structures for the equitable distribution of resources and benefits to support the implementation of

decisions co-created with the community. At this stage, small representative groups can be formed to act on behalf of the community and defend its rights. Depending on funding, as well as the credibility, authority, power, and influence of the initiator or leader, the community receives assistance for infrastructure development (e.g., construction or improvement of roads and buildings) and support in project implementation, along with monitoring of its alignment with sustainability goals.

6) Monitoring and evaluation. In almost all programs, the final action consists of monitoring and evaluating the program's success and the achievement of the established objectives, using a specific set of indicators. (Dushkova, 2024)

Collective Social Innovation

Collective Social Innovation focuses on political culture. It involves promoting and strengthening the participation of the community and the beneficiaries themselves to find "new ways of doing things" in relation to the current state of the art in the region, transforming them into true agents of their own development and thus awakening civic awareness and, consequently, regional democracy.

The proposal to seek new alternative technologies based on the perception of previous models is no longer sufficient. It is believed that the current political system has been taken by surprise by the shift from a centralized form of government to a free market model, where expectations are not met and a break with dominant approaches and new forms of bottom-up governance emerge.

In other words, we must go beyond the organization of processes, products, and services, starting from the notions of innovation, co-construction, and co-production, thereby entering the domain of Social Technological Systems (STS).

Socio-technical systems (STS) are a way of developing and implementing product, process, and organizational technologies required to address complex

problems, generate dynamics of social and economic inclusion, democratization, and sustainable development for society.

STS are heterogeneous socio-technical systems configured among actors, community artifacts, and TIS, which together focus on problem-solution relationships as a complex process of co-construction.

As Vaillancourt (2011) states, “co-construction is related to public policies at the time of their development and not only at the time of their implementation”. However, he distinguishes four types or models of co-construction:

1) Mono-construction, referring to the model in which the state does not share responsibility but is the sole protagonist in decision-making.
2) Neoliberal co-construction, representative of the dominant current of New Public Management, in which the State is invited to work in cooperation with the private sector to build public policies—that is, with the dominant socioeconomic actors of the market economy.
3) Corporatist co-construction, in which certain sectors of socioeconomic activity and actors linked to the business and labor sectors are included in the dialogue and deliberation with the State, while others are excluded.
4) Democratic and solidarity-based co-construction, in which:
    - The State remains both “above” and “close” to the other public and private partners, with whom it engages in dialogue, interaction, and deliberation.
    - A constitutional reform enables the State to be a partner of civil society while remaining a partner of the market economy.
    - The State is one more agent in the deliberation between representative democracy and participatory democracy. • Society also recognizes the State's role as a partner in the social economy, as well as the participation of these same actors among themselves.

STS are studied as the trajectory of a co-construction process encompassing products, production and organizational processes, institutions, user-producer relationships, learning processes, problem/solution relationships, among others.

For example, the path taken by the study of an energy deficit, which, in the search for corrective solutions, leads to the creation of a cold chain,

complemented by the design of a food storage system with the potential to market surpluses.

Again, Tait and Dagnino (2013), drawing on Felix-Das Neves (2012), propose that the institutional socio-technical process of SSE establishments that have ventured into STS processes falls into one of the following technological modalities:

1) The "incremental innovation process" modality, adopted once the investigation into alternative possibilities of existing technologies has been exhausted. This is a development that is not very individual, as it is increasingly carried out jointly with the support of research and development centers or universities, to build a different reality.
2) The option of "radical innovation processes," adopted once the investigations under the previous modality have been exhausted. This is a state of development that allows explorations at the frontier of knowledge, which also demands the participation of (R&D) centers or universities.

It is necessary to introduce here the four categories that the usual empirical classification of social innovation distinguishes in current social technology systems:

- Incremental innovation, often used to refer to small improvements obtained in existing processes or solutions, or in the efficiency, effectiveness, or sustainability of organizational areas or divisions.
- Radical innovation involves developing new ideas or approaches that challenge power structures or defend social justice and equity. It also includes deeply rooted social norms, beliefs, or institutions.
- Disruptive innovation involves the development of new markets, products, services, or business models that challenge the status quo and create new opportunities. It also includes significant changes in how people live, work, or interact.
- Transformative innovation is the most ambitious and challenging form of social innovation. It involves profoundly transforming social systems, structures, or institutions to create more equitable and sustainable societies.

The objective of "radical innovation" is to participate in the transition from one development model to another, driven by the impetus of the social actors themselves and with a clear aspiration for social transformation. To achieve this, they have chosen to utilize social technological systems that combine technological and social elements useful for addressing complex problems.

These systems approach the design, development, and implementation of technologies with a focus on social inclusion, democratization, and sustainable development.

Under neoliberal ideology, it is believed that only the radical reconstruction of our society's technological systems can transcend the stable stagnation of unsustainable systems, a stagnation reinforced by the pressure exerted by market forces filtered from the macroeconomic level (contextual scenarios or landscapes) and the mesoeconomic levels (dominant regimes, norms, practices, and other factors).

Examining this further, within incremental and radical technological approaches, a clear distinction emerges between the concepts of social innovation in products, processes, or services, which are microeconomic in nature (the niches of experimentation), and technological innovation within a macroeconomic context, characterized by developments that generate imbalances and crises.

Most often, the former result from individual, philanthropic, or market-oriented initiatives, while the latter abound in the problem-solution relationship of social needs, environmental issues, open access to knowledge, and other factors. These latter approaches link production, knowledge, innovation, and social development, fostering broader social processes and giving rise to initiatives for experimentation and innovation.

The contributions of both civil and social enterprises and citizens who may participate in technology development generate impacts in terms of:

- Governance (opening processes to the participation of multiple stakeholders).
- Co-construction (influencing the decision-making capacity of social

actors in the design of public policies).
- Plural economy (hybridizing resources from diverse origins in the same process).

One of the critical aspects of governance concerns the type of leadership that can be exercised by those responsible for facilitating the development of initiatives.

The involvement of so many agents in the socialization of the various learning processes required in social innovation raises significant concerns about the fact that there is no single agent with sufficient power to instruct the rest; rather, this power must be built. Therefore, it is a collective process in which interdependent agents participate and influence one another.

A key aspect for assessing the potential of shared leadership is how to integrate those with greater power in other areas or processes. Similarly, another key consideration in building shared leadership processes is the threat posed by dependence on external resources.

For its part, co-production, as Vaillancourt (2011) states: "…refers to the implementation of public policies and implies the participation not only of state actors, but also of actors from the market and/or civil society (third sector). In short, the co-production of public policies develops at the organizational level (in the organization of products and services).

The basic foundation of the co-production of public policies aimed at the general welfare of the population and the provision of public services develops at the institutional level and resides in the participation of civil society in decision-making processes.

Co-production could refer to a form of service provision regulated and financed by the State but carried out autonomously by citizens, but also to an agreement in which citizens produce their own services, at least in part."

The structural change of the productive matrix

From the perspective of the SSE movement, the structural change of a community's or society's productive matrix implies placing limits on the self-regulating conception of markets with their resource selection and price allocation properties, especially in the areas of labor, nature, and money.

The aim is to re-root the economy in society and nature by promoting other economic forms such as reciprocity, redistribution, household management, and planning.

In this mode of structural change, solidarity means recognizing the other as a natural being in need. Democratic solidarity is an expression of communal integration and non-market institutional structures, grounded in the spirit of giving and the principles of reciprocity and distribution. (Braña, Dominguez, and León, 2016)

Democratic solidarity based on reciprocity is materialized in the voluntary collective action of citizens seeking mutual aid. Democratic solidarity based on redistribution emerges in the State's public action to consolidate social cohesion and reduce inequalities.

Case studies serve as the theoretical framework for a process of structural change in the productive matrix of an economy characterized by a specific type of social relations framed by cultural, social, political, and environmental factors. Here, this methodology analyzes each intervention experience as a whole, seeking to observe how each of the following three basic components unfolds: consultation with stakeholders, definition of the transformative plan to be followed, and implementation of the proposed structural change in the productive matrix for a given community.

This work aims to configure this process as a microeconomic representation of how exchanges and interactions of production, consumption, circulation, and distribution occur, motivated by objectives of collective well-being, reciprocity, and mutual support.

In the first consultation stage, a dialogue is established with local stakeholders,

organizations, and the community to present the initiative and solidify commitments.

In developing the proposal, a multidisciplinary working group assesses the productive and organizational capacities of the territory and its dynamics of consumption, social, cultural, and political relations. At this stage, a complementary dual process emerges: both from a symbolic interactionist perspective, which captures the actions and interactions of individuals within their own natural frameworks of development, and through the configuration of a hermeneutic spiral that interprets the objectives of the subjects' actions, leading to an understanding of the reality under investigation.

The benefit of having advantages for creating or strengthening a SSE system facilitates the definition of common objectives and agreements among the actors and promotes the development of a phased program and the formulation of performance indicators that are useful for evaluating progress and aligning practices with expectations. (Rúa, et al., 2016)

Indeed, the characterization of participatory action research (PAR) as a methodological resource capable of linking the experimental approach of social science with social action programs makes it ideal for addressing the project of structural change in a community's productive matrix.

In turn, the emphasis on systematization transcends the description of practice, linking it to theory and proposing a path for generalizing learning across six areas related to activation through the implementation of a productive matrix change model:

1) Building trust as the foundation for creating local solidarity markets.
2) Assessing the socioeconomic development of the territory.
3) Convening stakeholders.
4) Raising awareness and providing training on this type of articulation of economic initiatives.
5) Developing proposals tailored to the territory.
6) Planning reflections prior to implementation.

VII – CURRENT ECONOMIC FORMATS OF THE SSE

Economic formats arising from the practice of solidarity in modernity

The economic formats of the SSE are diverse, and each has its own history, whether they have arrived Currently, this is achieved through the adaptation of ancestral associative practices, or those created through collective reflection to address needs related to the production of goods and services or to extend the benefits to the SSE.

Attracting alternative proposals for social innovation, whether cooperative, collaborative, or techno-social, should always represent a challenge for the ongoing organization of both the products and services offered, and the formats and spaces for solidarity-based exchange. These spaces not only generate cooperative and collaborative socioeconomic processes but also foster civic, cultural, and political exchanges.

The main economic models from the European social economy, still in use, for implementing the solidarity economy are:

Local services. Since the early 1970s, this type of organization began to take shape at the initiative of representative organizations of the European social economy, known in Denmark as "project promoters," with the mission of encouraging citizens to voluntarily assume responsibility for social policies.

Among the services offered were "everyday services (domestic, childcare, information and communication technologies); services aimed at improving living conditions (housing, security, local public transport, enhancement of urban public spaces, local commerce, enhancement of cultural heritage, cultural development, sport); and environmental services (waste management, water management, protection and maintenance of natural areas, regulation, pollution control, and related facilities). (Laville, 2010)

Microfinance. Microfinance, as we know it today, popularized by Muhammad Yunus, Nobel Peace Prize laureate in 2006, already existed in Europe during the days of the Second French Revolution and the Conservative Welfare State. Examples include the Raiffeisen, the first savings and credit cooperative created in Switzerland in 1849, and the Caisse du Crédit Mutuel, created in Strasbourg in 1882, inspired by the Swiss model.

Historically, microfinance primarily refers to microcredit. A microcredit loan, as its name suggests, is a small loan aimed mainly at low-income individuals. The loan officer is the direct link between Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) and the client. This officer must travel daily using available means of transport (motorcycle, car, or on foot) to meet with clients at their workplace or home.

Finance is considered inclusive when it takes into account all stakeholders in the value chain, not only the end beneficiary but also donors, the microfinance institution, and, more broadly, the impact it may have on the planet, whether environmental, energy-related, or economic.

Like financial inclusion, microfinance aims to expand access to affordable and responsible non-bank products and services for populations excluded from the traditional banking system. Beyond microcredit, other financial services include money transfers, micro-savings, micro-insurance, and micro-pensions, among others.

The distribution of financial inclusion in the market is handled by various financial organizations: MFIs, cooperatives, micro-insurance providers, and banks, among others. It is essential that these distributors operate in a socially responsible manner to achieve the main objective of financial inclusion: combating poverty. However, these distributors still face many challenges: the challenge is to serve the interests of the poor while simultaneously ensuring their own economic viability.

Social currencies. Social currencies are issues of rights expressed in a specific unit of account that are distributed among the members of the same association to develop interpersonal relationships. This allows for the valuation of local capabilities beyond those mobilized in market production, and establishes spaces of trust where exchange rules can be negotiated.

Social currencies do not exist before the transaction. Furthermore, where this form of payment has been adopted, hoarding, or the retention of minted coins, is penalized with a reduction in exchange value, to encourage circulation.

The objective of social currencies is to value local productive capacities beyond those mobilized in market production. It involves creating a unit of account to distribute among the members of the same association the product of their client relationships, achieved through their own interpersonal interactions, thus establishing spaces of trust where exchange rules can be negotiated.

The general idea is to escape the state monopoly by replacing contractual exchange based on individual autonomy with membership in a social network that aims to be convivial and in which multilateral exchanges can take place, lasting beyond the transaction and fostering the renewal of alliances.

Both microfinance and social currencies constitute effective financial instruments once attempts by the state or labor unions to instrumentalize worker cooperatives as a safeguard for employment have been eliminated. These attempts would involve negotiating agreements linked to modifications of social security and unemployment insurance regulations.

These models aim to encourage the unemployed to create jobs and promote participation in the self-management of bankrupt companies acquired by the workers.

Exploring economic diversity offers an opportunity to reveal its other facets and to construct a new economic language that identifies other levels of differentiation and opposition to the dominant economic model. This is not only for inclusion in our discourse but also for the individual and collective practices through which we can shape our own economic ethics. (Neira, 2021)

Broadening our understanding of consumption involves reflecting on our own practices and opens up a discussion about the ethical and political nature of the market and its dependence on many other people to access the goods and services necessary for everyone's life.

Local Exchange Systems. Modern bartering, or Local Exchange Systems (LETS), originated in Canada in the 1970s. It consists of non-profit, local initiatives based on reciprocity, trust, and mutual aid, providing the community with information about products and services offered for exchange among its members.

Generally, these initiatives arise when there are situations of unemployment, precarious employment, migration, increased poverty, and other factors that affect local conditions. This system functions similarly to time banks and differently from social currencies that require the existence of physical money.

In addition to creating a new local market parallel to the traditional one, where people's skills, abilities, knowledge, and even assets are pooled to be used as a medium of exchange for the benefit of the community, it is necessary to keep a record of all transactions, use a local currency whose value is agreed upon by the members themselves, and adopt an alternative para-banking system that operates with individual accounts free from fluctuations and speculation, since the system is based on trust and the common good.

LETS systems emerge as an alternative to the traditional banking system. Gisbert states that people's skills, abilities, knowledge, and even assets are

pooled to be used as a medium of exchange for the benefit of the community.

The para-banking entity operates with individual accounts in the new local currency, free from fluctuations and speculation, since the system is based on trust and the common good. Credit and the rental of goods can also be part of the system, and the wealth generated does not leave the community.

As is often the case with other social initiatives of all kinds, the volunteerism of their promoters and the lack of institutional support for these projects are usually the main reasons why most of these initiatives have a very short lifespan or fall into marginalization until they disappear. Conversely, in cases where they emerge and grow rapidly, such as in Australia, the United Kingdom, and Argentina, they have had to be regulated and even taxed, sometimes in local currency.

Time banks. There are precedents for exchanges based on units of time dating back to the 19th century, specifically the Cincinnati Time Store. However, modern time banks are part of a significant mutualist and cooperative movement, both in the United States and later in Europe and the rest of the world, beginning in the 1980s.

The purpose of the first-time bank experiments, implemented by the pensioners' union in Parma, Italy, was to meet the needs of retirees, who had a lot of free time, and simultaneously help women balance their work and family lives.

A time bank is a community-based time-sharing initiative that symbolically emulates the workings of a bank, but in which what is "lent" and "received" is time dedicated to serving others. The most common exchanges involve sociocultural activities or activities related to daily living needs.

The unit of exchange is the hour, regardless of the service offered or received. Each service, piece of knowledge, or skill exchanged has the same value, measured in units of time, regardless of whether the donor is a beginner or an expert.

The user receives a service from a group member for a period and commits to

providing a service of an equally long duration. In other words, it "works through mutual credits in the form of time." Each user holds a "current account" that records their available time balance.

The exchanges are not only bilateral ("I give to you and you give to me"), but also multilateral: they involve supply and demand within a pool of services, knowledge, and skills within the time bank, such that person A helps B, B helps C, C helps D, and D helps A.

Solidarity-based economic formats identified by social science

The following five most recently emerged forms of solidarity-based economics have been derived from the theory of economic integration models developed in the social sciences, whose essential characteristics are described below.

Solidarity-based collaborative networks (SBNs). Unlike cooperation, in collaboration, support for the common good represents an interest, remuneration, or payment to the participant. A solidarity economy network (SEN) is a model of solidarity-based economic integration that connects productive social enterprises, resulting in the revitalization of socioeconomic flows within their own environments.

The strong cohesion generated by the convergence of collaborative work and solidarity fosters a solid sense of belonging to the network. The network is key to solidarity consumption, and SEN drives the SSE through consumption.

A solidarity consumption network is a post-capitalist alternative that promotes the consumption of only goods and services offered by solidarity economy initiatives. The sustainability of these networks depends on the dissemination of explicit ethical values and shared political aspirations for raising awareness and promoting alternative values that are "contagious."

This is similar to the reciprocal public function, in which an economy is conceived as serving social needs, taking nature into account as part of it, and not as accumulating and concentrating wealth in the hands of privileged sectors.

Solidarity consumption incorporates various qualities that are considered defining characteristics of other types of consumption; indeed, this mode of consumption aims to be: ethical, responsible, healthy, conscious, and participatory or collaborative. (Mance, 2000)

An important characteristic of a solidarity economy is that the surpluses generated go into its funds, to develop other initiatives, or to revitalize production chains based on this solidarity, collaboration, and democracy. In this way, the economy is profoundly transformed; all its dimensions are transformed.

When a citizen buys a product, they might be contributing to a process of liberation, but they could also be contributing to a process of domination. But if one does so rationally, one is incorporating the subjectivity of others into one's own subjectivity, incorporating the lives of others into one's own life.

Following the dictates of solidarity consumption, where there are no deceptive advertisements to make one buy this or that, allows one to recognize in the purchased product that there is a piece of the lives of the people who made it, that it contains a part of the culture of the people who produce it.

With such values and labor, thus liberated, the goal is to advance in the construction of a post-capitalist economic system, connecting human capacities and needs to expand the freedoms of all, not for the enrichment of a few.

The result of transforming a market economy into a society with a market—regulated by the state and socially controlled—is called a “solidarity market.” This market features prices agreed upon between producers, intermediaries, and consumers, and encompasses community and social actors who project the value of solidarity throughout the economy.

The promoters and collaborators operating in a solidarity market could be independent private actors with a non-capitalist connection to building an emancipatory project and the reproduction of life, seeking to break ties with the figure of the intermediary who usurps a portion of the wealth generated.

The framework of moral considerations limits the actions of each participant in a solidarity market (these include buyers, sellers, producers, users, regulators, legislators, promoters, among others), ensuring that no one is negatively impacted in terms of their ability to reproduce their lives.

Production chains are a more advanced stage of Solidarity Economic Circuits (SECs), and their strengthening as interconnected socioeconomic alternatives leads to the solidarity-based and ecological development of the entire chain. According to Euclides Mance (2000), to promote the strengthening of the socioeconomic alternatives involved, it is necessary to ensure the following:

- Producing within the networks everything they still consume from the capitalist market: final products, supplies, services, among others.
- Correcting value flows to avoid redirecting capitalist production, which occurs when solidarity-based enterprises purchase goods and services from capitalist enterprises.
- Generating new jobs and distributing income through the organization of new economic enterprises to meet the demands of the networks themselves.
- Guaranteeing the economic conditions for the ethical exercise of public and private freedoms. The collective reinvestment of surpluses makes possible the progressive reduction of everyone's working hours, the increase of free time for well-being, and the improvement of each person's consumption patterns.

Solidarity Economic Circuits. In the logic of market activity, circulating value flows from one market to another and ultimately concentrates in places where hegemonic economic power exists. A Solidarity Economic Circuit (SEC) constitutes a continuous and circular core of economic flows leading to the establishment of both temporary and permanent relationships.

In ESCs, perceptions of solidarity, association, and self-management are synergistically harmonized, enhancing Razeto's C factor (community). If social enterprises in communities and associated cooperatives were able to organize solidarity economic circuits with the capacity to reorganize all the value

produced—whether through buying, selling, lending, or any other means—in such a way that its concentration could liberate productive forces, means of exchange, and credit capabilities, they would succeed in building an economically liberated productive subsector or local segment.

To the extent that the territory and its socioeconomic expressions manage to connect various circuits—such as a social production circuit and a potential economic service circuit to eliminate intermediaries, and another comprehensive circuit that could articulate a cooperative network of all activities to deliver a product to a target population—a post-developmental idea is already emerging, one that goes beyond mere subsistence and focuses on life itself.

If these circuits, which in the traditional view of capital circuits appropriate generated values, could realize these same values within solidarity-based economic circuits, they would represent a significant opportunity for accumulation within the social and solidarity economy (SSE).

Assuming the existing mixed economy as oriented towards social transformation because it allows for the development of another socioeconomic system within it—in this case, organized by the principle of the expanded reproduction of life for all—the SSE would be elevated from its character as a "utopian movement" to that of "a transitional proposal" for a different rationality.

This paradigm of structural transformation is presented by the Brazilian philosopher and educator Euclides André Mance (2000) as a Theory of the Emancipation of the popular classes of the Latin American postcolonial experience, characterized by "all groups that are uprooted, technologically dislocated, and not integrated into a cybernetic and automated society."

That is to say, it includes all the long-term unemployed, inhabitants of slums, landless agricultural workers, and underemployed, seasonal, and informal workers who are excluded from the formal economy—all those whom some Salvadoran Marxist unionists sarcastically dubbed "the pooretariat" (Icaza, 2008) or "the pooretariat" (Löwy, 1996). (Estévez, 2014)

The process implemented in a Solidarity Economic Circuit (SEC) proves to be virtuous, as it allows the solidarity-based consumption of products and services to stimulate production; this increase in production creates jobs; job creation leads to a more equitable distribution of wealth; the solidarity-based distribution of wealth activates both solidarity-based consumption and the creation of new ventures and businesses; and, in turn, the creation of new ventures and businesses generates diversified products and new jobs. And so, it would continue in all social and solidarity economy (SSE) systems. (Mance, 2020)

Among the aspects to be implemented for the full instrumentalization of SECs are:

- Mapping economic flows in local, national, and international territories and networks.
- Projecting on-demand production to meet the mapped needs.
- Projecting solidarity economy circuits and collaborative networks to connect ventures and facilitate their integration.
- Creating ventures and adopting appropriate social technologies to strengthen the projected solidarity economy exchanges.
- Forming solidarity economy networks integrating the various actors. It is necessary to create economic feedback loops among the solidarity-based actors within a network or territory, enabling the expanded reproduction of economic value for the benefit of all.
- Reorganize production, marketing, consumption, and financing chains.
- Establish solidarity-based socioeconomic arrangements to promote sustainable endogenous development in its economic, ecological, and solidarity dimensions.

Fair Trade. Fair-Trade is a global social movement that promotes a form of trade based on dialogue, transparency, respect, and equity among small producers and workers disadvantaged by the lack of equitable participation in the commercial activity of the capitalist market.

Its practice has a long history, beginning in the United States in the mid-20th century with local movements of embroidery artisans, followed by the organization of the European Fair-Trade Association in 1987.

In 1989, the International Federation of Alternative Trade (IFAT) was created, and in 2004, the global network of fair-trade organizations known as the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) was established as a unique international verification model. Through independent audits, the WFTO certifies its members' compliance with the 10 principles of fair trade in their businesses and supply chains. ensuring that products are produced with fair labor standards, fair prices and without exploitation, and that producers receive fair compensation and have access to resources to improve their quality of life.

Regarding the organizational component, two dynamics were activated: the importing company responsible for the international transaction and the fair trade shops, primarily originating from social movements and NGOs.

The main strategy agreed upon by the parties consisted of defining a surcharge that was passed entirely on to the producers, with a portion going to the intermediary shopkeeper responsible for driving change in the rules of traditional trade and ensuring some surplus for the producer.

Initially, this premium was intended to acknowledge the fact that in developing and peripheral countries, production takes place under exploitative conditions with low wages, no social protection for workers, unpaid child and female labor, among other factors, meaning the price did not reflect the true costs of production.

In the economic, social, and political arena, associated producers, ethical and responsible consumers, and facilitating mediators are emerging, revealing that new rules for the market are possible.

In 2004, the global network of fair-trade organizations, the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO), was created, highlighting the need for a change in the rules and practices of conventional trade and demonstrating how a successful business can also prioritize people.

On its website, the WFTO maintains that Fair-Trade goes beyond mere exchange and demonstrates that greater justice in global trade is possible. It

proposes the application of its unique international verification model, which, through independent audits, certifies its members' compliance with the 10 principles of Fair-Trade in their businesses and supply chains. This ensures that products are produced with fair labor standards, fair prices, and without exploitation, and that producers receive fair compensation and have access to resources to improve their quality of life.

The following are the ten principles of Fair-Trade:

1) Creating Opportunities for Economically Disadvantaged Producers.
2) Transparency and Accountability.
3) Fair Trading Practices.
4) Payment of a Fair Price.
5) No Child Labor and Forced Labor.
6) Commitment to Non-Discrimination, Gender Equality, Women's Economic Empowerment, and Freedom of Association.
7) Guarantee good working conditions.
8) Capacity building.
9) Promotion of Fair Trade.
10) Respect for the environment.

In this sense, producer communities located in different or distant territories can strengthen fair trade as an alternative to free trade through organization and solidarity-based interconnection.

Prosumption in the SSE. Prosumption refers to the act of producing one's own goods for consumption, that is, without intermediaries. The concept can be broadened to include the application of direct marketing strategies by producers, or the organization of consumers following ethical criteria to avoid harmful social or environmental impacts.

From the perspective of the social and solidarity economy (SSE), prosumption includes all practices that involve participation in production. In some cases, this participation involves paying for the use of goods or services with labor, while in others, it involves greater collective involvement and commitment, such as in so-called "coordination practices" within volunteer organizations that aim to satisfy needs for goods and services. These practices encompass

logistics, food preparation, the purchase of organic products, food waste recycling, and its conversion into alternative energy.

When prosumers act as volunteers, they create value, produce knowledge, reproduce labor, accelerate innovation, act as buyers of goods even when their work is unpaid, and market products, services, and production techniques.

Prosumerism establishes a consumption rationality oriented toward creation, expecting nothing in return other than recognition of the usefulness of one's contribution. This effort can form the basis of a non-monetary transaction interacting with a monetary one, which then enters the economic flow by shifting value from one source to another.

Coordination among consumers seeking to transform or at least manage inputs to satisfy the needs of those involved, and the fusion between producers and consumers to define self-sufficiency policies, are other ways of fostering economic integration motivated by objectives of collective well-being, reciprocity, and mutual support, and grounded in a type of cultural, social, political, and environmental relationship.

These new ways of producing, consuming, and distributing prioritize resources and economic factors, generating in turn a democratic market in which the material bases for addressing the legitimate needs and desires of all its members tend to be synergistic and oriented toward achieving local development.

It is possible to conclude, then, that an economy is socially constructed when it is based on interactions of its actors fulfilling specific, socially valued roles.

Inter-cooperation among cooperatives. Cooperative integration models are understood as the expression of business schemes for the defense of institutional performance of a vertical nature (trade union-based), or of social development of a horizontal nature (inter-cooperative), as the main means of growth in macro and microeconomic perspectives.

Based on localized experiences, inter-cooperation has evolved into the concepts of: Financial Inter-cooperation, Productive Inter-cooperation, and Territorial

Inter-cooperation.

Inter-cooperation among cooperatives is necessary to resolve the apparent conflict of interest between associated producers and consumers regarding price. Inter-cooperation should be considered a specific element of the overall identity of cooperation.

The major shortcoming of the traditional cooperative sector has been the lack of a genuine culture of solidarity that strengthens the identity of the cooperative model, the sense of belonging, broad participation, and the sustainability of the group of people that constitutes the cooperative association.

A major challenge for the cooperative sector lies in the management of "the commons," those social goods that belong to everyone and no one at the same time, goods that are common to all humanity and that are currently being exploited by commercial interests.

Given the profound uncertainty surrounding the evolution of institutions in the face of countless ways to organize socially with respect to "the commons" that differ from the market or the state, value systems such as global solidarity, social and ecological justice, fraternity and equity, and other related spheres, are only just beginning to impact the social reality they fundamentally question.

Another issue to resolve is that, in a global economy, cooperatives must continually conceive and implement diverse mechanisms for coordination and innovation to compete and cooperate with one another.

Since inter-cooperation alone is insufficient as a collective strategy for managing long-term interdependence, mutualism shifts scale, moving from cooperative components to a new form of solidarity-based organization called "coopetition," framed within a continuum between cooperation and competition, with "coopetition" among solidarity-based allies at its core. (Hannachi, et al., 2020)

The main objective of coopetition is often to manage interdependence, which requires the continuous development and implementation of collective and

competitive strategies. This ultimately equips companies with new capabilities for strategically interpreting their environment.

Leaders of these types of collective organizations are able to coordinate and influence each other to create a network alliance, or a joint agreement, that manages the development of a business, a social project, or a regional territory.

As a result of this coordination among competing cooperatives, they can favor the options of cooperating members by developing the following types of levers:

- Offering technical support, advice, and raising awareness among their members.
- Centralizing access to inputs and generating higher margins.
- Price fixing and blocking certain unfavorable practices.

The benefit of solidarity alliance strategies between competing cooperatives is an alternative to mergers, consolidations and business combinations that allows alliances to take advantage of synergies and strengthen negotiating power without major losses of freedom or flexibility and strengthen their influence in the organization of value chains.

CONCLUSIONS

The Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) is a socioeconomic model that promotes the systematization of diverse alternative forms of solidarity-based economics, seeking a civilizational shift in society that, originating beyond the periphery of the system, can extend its influence to become the center of a new system.

In the current state of economic practice, for an SSE project to be considered an alternative production system, it should have emerged from a community of individuals, families, and organizations that share a sense of belonging to their collective, where economic, social, and cultural ties are fostered, regenerating and reinforcing their own identity, and where coordination is exercised, at least initially, at the local-territorial level.

Likewise, the recognition of diverse practices and languages within a community mediated by another contributes to raising awareness of its own place within a system presented to it as one of totalizing daily routines, detached from its own expert knowledge. It also fosters a commitment to decentering itself from this capitalist-centric narrative, which, due to its abstract, alienating, external, and institutional nature, is known to rest on a now-contested neoclassical economic conception.

From within a mixed economy like the one we find ourselves in, an alternative to capitalism could begin to emerge as it aims for a gradual transformation of

production and social interaction toward more egalitarian, supportive, and sustainable forms, promoting experimentation with scientific techniques, sound economic practices, and democratic social relations.

In other words, without disregarding the correlation of ideological forces in the world, the transformation toward another socioeconomic system would only be understandable if it were perceived as a transitional proposal of a different rationality constructed by an organic, counter-hegemonic sector within society.

To be able to build an organic and counter-hegemonic sector within capitalist society, it would be necessary to approach the economy from an ethical and political perspective, which, in a different way, deploys strategies and brings together relevant tactics in favor of majorities victimized by the prevailing system, seeking to pressure for a favorable reorientation of public policies and market regulation.

However, a dual attitude is common among the SSE units in Latin America: ideological dissent regarding the market system, while simultaneously penetrating the market logic that operates within it.

Of course, it is not possible to continue proceeding in this way, under a horizon of possibility conceived by external interests. Given this, a redefinition of the horizons of near-future possibility is necessary. The idea of breaking with the logic of capitalist accumulation shapes the articulation with a vision of a post-development horizon decided upon by the members of the collective themselves, based on the reproduction of life, distinct from that of capital.

Within the process of weaving the social fabric of a renewed Latin American society, actions of economic diversification and alternatives, along with the questioning of discourses, in addition to contradicting the accumulative logic of capital, configure an emancipatory potential and integrative perspectives that promote the affirmation that other worlds are possible, as is also said of the resistance deployed by social movements.

According to de Souza and Rodríguez (2011), an alternative social formation does not mean an abrupt break with the capitalist model, but rather a gradual

process of valuing this transformation, which, among other aspects, successively involves integration with other economic processes in the territory, insertion into networks of mutual support, autonomy, and collaboration with the State.

Once the legal and institutional support of government authorities and an organizational approach in the form of networks and associations have been achieved, SSE units have to ensure their self-sustainability and participate in the redistributive logics adopted between the State and capitalist enterprises to protect the subsistence of excluded and informal sectors.

Usually, grassroots initiatives developed by activists, groups, and organizations that lead solutions for sustainable development tend to experiment with social innovations in civil society settings. Obviously, the niches of civil society do not exhibit the consensual progress attributed to technological niches.

Technology niches comprise organizations and intermediary actors that act as "global carriers" of best practices, standards, institutionalized learning, and other intermediary resources, such as networking and lobbying, that build on and in turn inform concrete local projects or experiments.

The response of technology to social needs implies the prior development of the "individuals" themselves as heterogenous actors who are "empowered" to confront the power that prevents them to achieve them.

Unlike the greening or decarbonization of conventional companies, the subjects, actors, and agents, participants, structure they shared problems with the current system and develop alternative visions and shared objectives.

The experiments within the niches describe a series of development rounds, from which the decision-makers take information that, when evaluated and classified as viable, decide to implement them mainly on a small scale, which can then snowball following a specific trajectory and describing the complete transition of the system.

In general, the public policies of governments in many parts of the world to address the specific needs of vulnerable or marginalized groups or communities are sometimes made through third sector entities, and other times by sponsoring the organization of civil and voluntary societies, which support social transformation towards sustainability. (Dushkova, 2024).

Reflection on three cases of sustainable development involving SSE entities in Colombia.

Among countless Colombian experiences of SSE, the following three cases have been chosen for the referential importance that has been recognized for them on the occasion of the construction and implementation of strategies applicable in the Final Peace Agreement between the Colombian State and the extinct FARC-EP guerrillas.

The aspects that have contributed most to the emergence of possibilities favorable to the fulfillment of social transformation and sustainable development in the territories studied are:

- Strategic articulation.
- The promotion of productive chains.
- The creation of opportunities.
- Building trust.
- The generation of well-being

A- LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATIVISM IN SOCORRO AND SAN GIL

In particular, the most outstanding achievement of the Social Development and Cooperativism Program in Socorro and San Gil is the emergence of countless local leaders with a strong capacity for conciliation. This capacity has been tested in the task of solving the problems plaguing the region under historically adverse conditions and social chaos due to little or no state intervention and low market penetration. After almost half a century of experimenting with comprehensive initiatives that involve the promotion of production chains, the social cohesion developed by the people of southern Santander is remarkable,

allowing them to recognize one another, cultivate themselves, grow together, and develop collective self-esteem.

This project is notable for its methodology of co-creating innovative solutions, prioritizing an inquiry-based learning approach that applies collaborative work among citizens. This approach enabled the identification, investigation, and processing of problems affecting daily life in the region. This was achieved through the creation of collective spaces for strategic planning focused on the collective interest, the establishment of communication channels and access to information, the strengthening and enhancement of existing cultural initiatives in the territory, and the increase in trust among social actors within their communities. (Fajardo, 1996)

Characterization. This program exemplifies a model of “horizontal subsidiarity,” following practices of civil economy or communion, in which the aim is to build a cluster through open invitation and voluntary participation of those individuals committed to engaging in sustainable regional projects designed to meet shared needs and interests. Here, under the leadership of Father Ramón Gonzalez Parra (1928-2022) and with the support of the Secretariat of Social Pastoral Care (SEPAS) of Socorro, acting as "supporters" or cooperators, who, in addition to assuming the role of constant support of capital and community ties, created this program with the dual purpose of: addressing the lack of commitment (loyalty, reciprocity) among its inhabitants regarding the region's development, and expanding spaces for relationships and empowering its people so they can become productive members of society. The participants' commitment is fostered by aligning their environment with the set of collective rules promoted by the organization, supported by appropriate communication processes and a framework that emphasizes the connection between different individual interests, rather than trying to control progress based on externally defined goals. Among the greatest benefits for the participants (cooperative members) are: the right to be included in production control, to advance to supervisory positions, and to gain control over participatory and democratic governance. (See Annex No. 1)

B- FOOD SECURITY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN 5 MUNICIPALITIES OF CAQUETA (SADER)

The Food Security and Rural Development Program in five municipalities of Caquetá was designed to combine learning in scientific and technical areas with social and cultural issues through interaction among the various stakeholders and the diverse activities undertaken. These activities contribute specific knowledge in food security, agroecological agriculture, and sustainable businesses, highlighting the evident collective and horizontal nature of the program. It is precisely the successful appropriation of knowledge, values, and the conscious use of local resources that has empowered this conflict-ridden region as an institutional benchmark for identifying strategic lines and developing public policies on peasant, family, and community agriculture. These policies have been used in the structuring and implementation of the Colombian Peace Agreement. From these initiatives, a community empowerment process began, fostering societal participation at the local level and attempting to articulate and create collaborative networks that have, in one way or another, influenced public policy decision-making. (Gómez, 2023)

Characterization. This program is similar to the "collaboration agreements" typically used by the Colombian government following an agreement or alliance between one of its entities (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development), which commits to implementing programs outlined in the National Development Plan (PND), and a non-profit organization (Caritas Colombia/Secretariat of Social Pastoral Care of Florencia), which contributes experience and knowledge in food security, agroecological practices, and the design of sustainable business models, as well as providing support to families for community organization and productive impact. These types of agreements do not involve direct compensation to the State, nor do they include precise instructions from the State to the contractor regarding the contract's objective. Nor may there be any market offer other than the one offered by the contractor, or if there is, the contracting must be for the optimization of public resources. (See Annex No. 2)

C- DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEASANT ECONOMY IN THE SUMAPAZ DISTRICT

The most decisive factor in the impact achieved by the Development of the Peasant Economy Program in the Sumapaz District has been social participation and its collective decision-making and planning processes. According to Colciencias (2010), citizen participation is "an organized process that enables the exchange of opinions, visions, and information among different social groups, and also fosters dialogue on problems (...), with the intention that these groups make a specific decision." Both the Sumapaz Peasant Association (ASOSUMAPAZ) and the Sumapaz Workers' Union (SINTRAPAZ), along with other strategic partner organizations, have promoted the creation and establishment of new forms of interaction, communication, operation, and management, through which they actively encourage community participation. In this way, they invest in the transformation of the people of Sumapaz through citizen empowerment processes, from fostering networked cultural entrepreneurship and access to information, to promoting knowledge and recognition of the community both internally and externally. (Rojas, 2018)

Characterization. This is clearly a model of a "public-private partnership agreement" in which a state entity (the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development with the support of the National Land Agency (ANT), the Bogotá District Secretariat of Economic Development, and the Sumapaz Local Mayor's Office) and a non-profit entity (ASOSUMAPAZ), on the occasion of the declaration of the Sumapaz Locality as a Peasant Reserve Zone (ZRC of Sumapaz), agree to the joint development of the locality's territorial planning to promote the peasant economy and prevent land concentration, related to the duties and functions assigned to state entities by law. Another state-owned financial institution (Fiduprevisora, Fiducentral, or Findeter), acting as a trust company, establishes a separate trust fund to manage the project funds. The trust company must consider the attributes of the non-profit entity when assessing its suitability for recognition purposes. (See Annex No. 3).

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATIVISM IN SOCORRO AND SAN GIL.

Presentation.
In the provinces of Guanentá, Comunera, and Vélez, in the south of the department of Santander, Colombia, there has been a significant experience of local development and cooperativism since 1960. This has led to the emergence of numerous grassroots organizations; a dynamic process of population mobilization; a specific methodological process to promote development; moments of reflection on the process of change; and, above all, a series of political, power, and organizational elements in response to a set of local opportunities and problems.

Strategies. Since its inception, this idea of regional development has been built around the following four strategies (Buchelli, 2001):
1) The province as a sociological unit of development. The Vélez, Comunero, or Guanentine provincial communities combine a sense of identity and belonging to generate social, economic, and cultural processes in which development occurs as a stage for its own realization. This concept of Local Development combines economic and employment space with social and historical identity. It is the idea of Territory understood as multidimensional, defined by a community of interests and a potential for solidarity organized under an administrative and, in some cases, government structure.
2) The creation of a network of community organizations. The cooperative movement is a convenient way to break away from the sectoral system and work through local structures, aiming for comprehensive development. This is achieved through the connection of a diverse range of cooperative organizations, all of which share a common goal: the integral development of individuals and communities, and social well-being. From 1967 to 1985, the Secretariat of Social Pastoral Care (SEPAS) held Peasant Congresses, held primarily with the rural population every two years. It also included teachers, parish priests, and small business owners, among others, to reflect on their own situation and propose concrete local development actions. This interaction of strategies and tools has resulted in the creation of an associative structure, or "social group," in the southern part of the Department of Santander, made up of the Central de Cooperativas (COOPCENTRAL), the grassroots organizations COMERCOOP, AUDICOOP, and COESCOOP, and the community organizations in EL COMUN, representing trade unions and peasant organizations, among others. The Development Projects Unit has supported the creation of other forms of organization, such as microenterprises, youth groups, cooperatives, and community action boards.

In recent years, efforts have been made to coordinate businesses within the solidarity economy system through various means:

1) Affiliation with integration organizations such as the Cooperative Confederation (CONFECOOP), the Central Cooperative (Central Cooperativa), COOPCENTRAL, the National Council for the Solidarity Economy (CONES), the National Federation of Tobacco Growers (FEDETABACO), the Santander cooperative network

(RESANDER) (made up of community radio stations in the region), the Coordinator of Peasant Organizations of the Region and the Country (EL COMÚN), and the Association of Women's Organizations (AFER).

2) Participation in networks and the formation of social federations and strategic alliances.
3) Training of community leaders. Through leadership and social promotion programs, community leaders have been created and trained to manage the businesses of the "social group." Essential components of social promotion programs have been education, communication, agroecology, and the environment. In education, based on its own results, the Institute for Rural Development (IDEAR) was established to offer Baccalaureate training in Rural Welfare in San Gil. Later, in 1971, it established the Institute for Social Leadership in the Municipality of Paramo, and in 1972, the Agricultural Institute for adult farmers in the Municipality of Zapatoca. In 1991, legal status was granted to the San Gil University Foundation (UNISANGIL). Through its cooperative alliance at the beginning of the millennium with the Autonomous University of Bucaramanga (UNAB), its academic offerings have been strengthened to respond to the needs and problems of its areas of influence. It was also institutionally recognized by the Ministry of Education, which granted it the Qualified Registry in March 2022, extending it to its other two locations in Yopal (Casanare) and Chiquinquirá (Boyacá).
4) Organization of civil society for the construction of a participatory democracy. The Development Projects Unit has been responsible for monitoring citizen participation processes and supporting small communities on issues such as human rights and peace, popular education, and municipal administration. The mechanism for generating social consensus around development and relationships of trust among social actors is, without a doubt, communication. Communication is the key strategy in the processes of social organization and citizen mobilization toward the construction of new practices and enterprises that shape the new solidarity-based society. Other strategies developed by the cooperative movement have included strategic alliances with different organizations, the management of international cooperation resources, and the management of projects and public policies favorable to the development of the region. Since 1977, the Social Communication Program was created to address the need to gather community experiences and opinions and to invite the primarily rural population to participate in Peasant Congresses, which also included teachers, parish priests, and small business owners, among others. Currently, community radio work for farmers and parish groups has 15 stations and offers training to young broadcasters.

Methodology.

Concepts such as local development and rural development have allowed us to observe the case in two spaces. The local approach is seen as an endogenous approach to development consisting of a system of interrelationships between individuals and organizations that can generate a true development management system, as an emergent, endogenous phenomenon that arises from the initiatives and dynamism of local communities. The rural approach is seen as the space where emphasis must be placed on the change of local societies and the relationships between their components in order to create accumulation centers.

Local development can be successful as long as it is a product of the behavior and dynamics of the population living in the territory. It is not surprising, then, that it is difficult to plan its actions in anticipation of desired results. Without an explicitly recommended guideline, this development initiative had to rely on its own data, collected from informants and stakeholders using its own methods tailored to the needs of the project, to gather information to explain the reality being discovered.

However, technically, it is possible to relate the idea of precision sought in a planning process with collectively justified decisions to a parallel iteration, an indefinite number of times, of a project formulation and evaluation process, such as the content expressed in the flowchart of activities proposed by Paul Prevost (1996) in his lecture at the International Seminar on "Cooperatives and Regional Development," held in San Gil on February 29.

Indeed, applying a constructivist comparative procedure to this referential proposal, which is structured in the stages of initiation (reflection), mobilization and information to the community (motivation), the creation of the necessary conditions (politicization), and the provision of tools to carry it out (organization), accompanied by a permanent dialogue of data and concepts, helped to identify a specific local development model (from the case study), which would yield results increasingly closer to reality.

This process of studying reality has been ongoing for forty years, focusing on two cooperatives identifying their strategy formulation process in cooperative enterprises for local development, the sample of informants with their methods of collecting information, and the approach to the actors in the process. Here, the cooperative has played a fundamental role in the process. It is a grassroots actor that advanced and continues to advance the organizational work of the idea of change established by the process leaders. (Buchelli, 2001)

This has been a process of constructing a self-adjusting "pattern" through the data, leading to the explanation of a reality. The search for data will end when it no longer modifies the explanation of each new reality. This proposed methodology has made it possible to obtain the following results:

Identification of the elements that have allowed the sustainability of this case of local development based on cooperatives. Perhaps the result was not a model; perhaps it is merely the description of a set of situations discovered during the research process.

1) de la organización cooperativa dentro del desarrollo local (en sus elementos sectoriales y comunitarios).
2) Identification of a methodology designed to further advance local development.
3) Clarify the role of cooperative organizations within local development (in its sectoral and community components).

Most Visible Results

The Association of Women for a New Society, with more than 300 members and a network of 18 municipal women's associations, has managed to establish a presence in the local socioeconomic context by proposing development projects and new ways of socializing between men and women.

Acuascoop manages a rural aqueduct for three municipalities. ECOFIBRAS and COOHILADOS DEL FONCE are two worker cooperatives that generate more than 200 direct jobs.

The Guardians of the Future organization and the network of recycling groups work for environmental conservation. Coovida, a senior citizens' cooperative, fills us with envy for the strength, fraternity, and artistry with which its members carry out their activities.

La Cometa radio station, along with 31 other community radio stations in the region, make up the Southern Santander Cooperative Network of Community Radio Stations (RESANDER), serving social and charitable organizations to communicate and express their views on topics of interest for charitable development.

ANNEX 2: FOOD SECURITY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN 5 MUNICIPALITIES OF CAQUETÁ (SADER)

Presentation
On November 15, 2022, the project "Food Security and Rural Development (SADER) in 5 Municipalities of Caquetá, Colombia" was closed in the municipality of Neiva, Huila. A space for socialization and listening was organized with the associations supported by the project.

The main objective of the project was to increase the income of 400 rural families distributed across five municipalities in the Department by empowering local communities, providing them with tools and knowledge that allow them not only to improve their agricultural practices but also to actively participate in decision-making related to productive development.

Strategies.
The project focused on two key strategic lines (Gómez, 2023):

1) Strengthening the food security of rural families by promoting agroecological practices that not only increase food production but also foster environmental sustainability.
2) Training and supporting families by promoting community organization and productive impact.

This project was implemented through the National Secretariat of Social Pastoral Care of Caritas Colombia (SNPS-CC), with the support of Caritas Norway, and lasted five years in the departments of Caquetá and Huila.

At the end of the closing session, several conclusions were drawn from each learning process, and then a final evaluation of each process was conducted. The SNPS-CC and the project hope that these individuals can continue to work in each of these associations, as they contribute to the development of their departments and to the care of "our common home" through the implementation of agroecological practices, avoiding agrochemical inputs in agricultural work, promoting production diversification, and developing agroforestry systems that conserve soils to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change.

Methodology.
As in all qualitative research, a documentary review using matrices is among the preparatory actions. In this case, considering food sovereignty and food security as analytical categories and applying search equations from bibliometrics, relevant authors registered in national and international databases are selected. This step contributes to the formation of the conceptual foundations of a robust theoretical framework that supports the planned interventions and strategies.

The methodology applied is the Theory of Change, which seeks to explain how the activities carried out generate results that contribute to achieving the intended final impacts. Any theory of change must begin with an accurate analysis of the situation that led to the intervention and verify that it attempts to solve the correct problem.

The next step is to clarify which aspects of the problem the intervention addresses. The theory to be developed consists of two parts: a theory on how the change will occur, which in this

case was achieved through a transformative change in a critical mass of individuals, and another on how the intervention will trigger it, which correspondingly involved investments in training programs, personal awareness workshops, debates and focus groups, and sessions on overcoming social trauma.

Additionally, the interactive MEAL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Achievement, Learning) technique is applied to coordinate work between the SNPS-CC and local implementing partners in the department's five municipalities, at any level of intervention, whether an event, project, program, policy, strategy, or organization, with the aim of facilitating the design, understanding, and analysis of progress. (Gómez, 2023)

Although monitoring is mentioned as a specific component of the MEAL plan, it actually involves constant feedback on progress toward established objectives, results, and indicators. The methodology is implemented through monthly work and follow-up meetings, where local teams share activities, achievements, lessons learned, difficulties, and projections. Monitoring and follow-up are also carried out through meetings with the accounting and management teams, ensuring the evaluation of goals and the identification of possible modifications to achieve them.

In the second line, monitoring mechanisms are deployed, ranging from farm visits to logbooks and monthly meetings that involve the review of previous actions, evidence-based reports, and the inclusion of aspects such as gender equality, the participation of people with disabilities, and climate change mitigation.
Finally, the learning component involves collecting and communicating data on project progress and impact, fostering a continuous process of knowledge acquisition and application. This process identifies achievements and areas for improvement, promoting organizational learning and knowledge dissemination.

Monitoring instruments are structured with specific tools to evaluate indicators, management reports, promoter reports, brief reports, progress reports, and attendance lists. These results are reflected in detailed tables showing the percentage of indicator fulfillment, reflecting the commitment of the field team.

Furthermore, training for the facilitator team is prioritized to ensure accurate information collection during follow-up visits, promoting a comprehensive approach that includes family life plans, local fish production levels, and improvements in follow-up surveys. Closing surveys are conducted to assess the project's economic and social impacts, demonstrating a comprehensive and participatory approach to project evaluation.

Most Visible Results
Through the SADER project, 700 farmers were supported, focusing on two strategic lines to ensure family food security through agroecological practices and the design of sustainable business models with short marketing channels. The second strategic line provided support to families for their training, community organization, and productive impact.

The project's impact is positive, particularly in strengthening families' knowledge of their social, economic, and cultural environments, highlighting the importance of the family and

territorial economy. It also generated significant improvements in living conditions, production processes, and food security, empowering families with tools and strategies that directly impact their well-being.

The focus on improving living conditions encompasses both economic and social aspects, recognizing the interconnectedness of these elements in the sustainable development of communities. Promoting food security, in turn, translates into greater family resilience to socioeconomic and climate dynamics.

This comprehensive approach, which not only addresses improvements in living conditions but also recognizes and addresses logistical challenges, demonstrates the project's resilience and commitment to the well-being of rural communities. The project has achieved substantial reach, involving fundamental aspects such as promoting partnership processes, developing life plans, and strengthening productive impact in institutional spaces, led by civil society.

However, it is important to recognize that the distances within the territory complicate the travel of the project team, as the beneficiary rural families are geographically dispersed. This dispersion makes it difficult to accurately monitor the productive units of the revolving fund and aquaculture, limiting the team's capacity to carry out continuous and detailed monitoring. Furthermore, the cost of transportation represents a significant financial challenge. The high cost of travel makes it necessary to coordinate meetings and follow-up meetings with rural families at central locations or rural centers, seeking to optimize available resources. This process can be complex and requires careful logistical planning to ensure effective community participation in project activities.

Despite these logistical challenges, the project has demonstrated its commitment to overcoming obstacles and achieving a positive impact. Adapting to the geographical dispersion of communities and efficiently managing logistical resources are key to maximizing the project's benefits and effectiveness (Gómez 2021; Vergara 2011).

During 2022, support was provided to: the Association of agricultural producers of the Las Juntas district (APROJUN, from Tello, Huila), the Alto Troja associative group (from Baraya, Huila), the Association of Women Entrepreneurs and Opportunity Generators (ASMEGO), the Association of Entrepreneurial Families Peace and Freedom (ASFAMEM), the Association of dairy farmers of Cartagena del Chairá (ASOPROELCA), the Association of entrepreneurial women of Caguán (ASOMUJERES DEL CAGUAN), the Association of innovative producers of lower Caguán (ASOPROINCA), the Association of Agricultural Producers of Entre Ríos (ASOENTRERIOS), the Association of Agricultural Entrepreneurs of Medio Caguán (ASOEMPRENDEAGRO DEL MEDIO CAGUAN), the Agrosemillas Association (AGROSEG of Guacamayas, Meta) and the Association of Poultry Farmers, Agricultural Producers and Community Tourism (ASOAVIPROAGRO of Florencía, Caquetá).

ANNEX 3: ENABLING THE PEASANT ECONOMY IN THE TOWN OF SUMAPAZ

Presentation

In the town of "Sumapaz" (1), in the Bogotá Capital District, approximately 5,600 peasants have lived since the last half century, experiencing the impact of the armed conflict. They occupy approximately 75,000 hectares within the jurisdiction of the districts of San Juan, Nazareth, and Betania. Numerous social organizations have been established there, generating a set of proposals for inclusion and social and economic development, shaping the territory as a zone of peace and seeking to bring benefits to the community.

(1) A variety of locations in Colombia bear the name Sumapaz. The Sumapaz region extends across the departments of Cundinamarca (167,000 hectares, of which approximately 780 hectares are part of the Sumapaz Locality, located southwest of the Bogotá Capital District), the department of Tolima (43,000 hectares), and the department of Meta (13,800 hectares).
In Cundinamarca, the Sumapaz Province is made up of the 10 municipalities of Fusagasugá, Tibacuy, Pasca, Usme and Alto Sumapaz, Pandi, Arbeláez, Silvania, San Bernardo, Cabrera, and Venecia; and in Tolima, the three municipalities of Icononzo, Cunday, and Villarrica, and the districts of El Palmar, Nuevo Mundo, Alpes, El Roble, Mercadilla, Núñez, La Colonia, La Pradera, El Duda, and others. The region's area of influence extends to Usme in Bogotá, and to El Pato and La Uribe in the department of Meta.
The Sumapaz National Natural Park, located 31 kilometers from the urban area of Bogotá, includes the world's largest páramo and lies between the departments of Cundinamarca and Meta, and includes the Bogotá towns of Sumapaz and Usme. The páramo extends across several municipalities, including Gutiérrez, Pasca, San Bernardo, Arbeláez (Cundinamarca), and Lejanías, El Castillo, La Uribe, Acacias, and Guamal (Meta).

Like all rural areas in Colombia, the town experiences problems due to the lack of public policies and specific economic measures regulated by the State, conflicts over territorial control inherent to a disputed territory, and the lack of adequate land management. The problems surrounding farmers' access to land for farming and marketing their products, and the lack of regional and national connectivity, all of which prevent the development of any competitive advantage for what is produced there.

Furthermore, because it is located within the protected area of the Natural Park and the Páramo, there are various restrictions: pollution and exploitation; the impacts on the soil and water caused by agricultural and livestock production in the area; practices that deforest or use agrochemicals; and socio-environmental conflicts related to access to and use of water, among others.

Since 1998, amid the struggles of peasant organizations, the Sumapaz Agricultural Workers' Union (SINTRAPAZ) formally requested from INCODER, the then-institutional body responsible for agrarian affairs, and from the government at the time, a declaration of the Sumapaz Locality as a Peasant Reserve Zone (ZRC). However, it received no response over the next 20 years.

The lack of awareness of the needs of rural communities and the limited support for the peasant economy limit the livelihoods of the area's peasants, who rely on this traditional production system to ensure their livelihood and trade. Legally, this situation of dispossession

and marginalization clearly violates citizens' right to livelihood, as they are forced to abandon their traditional activities to take on other roles in rural areas.

Sumapaz has historically been an organized area, where there have been several organizations fighting for land, including the Sumapaz Agricultural Workers' Union (Sintrapaz), community, youth, and women's organizations. However, there was no organization promoting associativity and food production, and above all, productive organization and food processing alongside environmental protection. Therefore, the need to establish one arose, and Asosumapaz was created (Interview 3).

The Sumapaz Peasant Association (ASOSUMAPAZ) was established on September 14, 2004, as an NGO with the social purpose of producing and processing agricultural products, including the stages of harvesting, selection, primary processing, and marketing. As a precursor to this establishment, a training process had taken place in 2003 to provide farmers with basic knowledge about associativity for development. (Rojas, 2018)

The interest that motivated the 19 pioneer farmers was based on the need to improve the conditions of small dairy producers in the San Juan district, and the idea of overcoming:

1) The difficulties of processing milk individually.
2) The impossibility of assigning competitive prices to products (milk and their derivatives).
3) The desire to produce marketable food within the locality contributes to the nutrition of its inhabitants.

Other factors that motivated the associative process were the need to promote environmental strengthening, which was threatened by practices adopted by the farmers themselves and by government policies, the need to defend the livelihood of the Sumapaceño farmers within the framework of protecting the ecosystem they inhabit, and the conservation of the territory by uniting communities around common goals related to the peasant economy.

At the territorial level, the Association maintains relationships with organizations working on territorial autonomy, especially Sintrapaz, and co-manages territorial issues focused on the fight for comprehensive agrarian reform. It is noteworthy that most members of Asosumapaz belong to Sintrapaz, finding a connection with its constituent elements. They also contribute to the organization's development of the Agroecological Pilot Center in the San Juan district.

Despite the issuance of the Bogotá Territorial Planning Plan (POT) in 2000 (compiled in 2004) and the 2013-2016 Local Environmental Plan, it wasn't until 2015 that the Río Sumapaz Rural Planning Unit (UPR) of Bogotá D.C. was adopted, and the Comprehensive Improvement Plans for the Population Centers of San Juan and La Unión were regulated through District Decree 552 of 2015, regulating the territorial development of these areas in accordance with current national regulations on the subject.

Methodology

Based on the defense of the peasant economy and its relationship with the defense of the páramo, the following outlines how the Sumpacenos achieved sufficient social empowerment from the establishment to realize their emancipatory aspirations and empowerment,

developing alternative economic forms to the prevailing mode of production. These achievements are expressed in the following three ways: the transformation of milk, the declaration of the Peasant Reserve Zone (ZRC), and the defense of the environment. (Rojas, 2018)

The transformation of milk builds territory. The localized processing of dairy products, in addition to meeting family needs, allows for the purchase of milk, idealizing an economy from a community perspective, eliminating intermediation and contributing to the achievement of food sovereignty. Indeed, the milk processing project was intended to achieve a territorial impact, benefiting residents. The milk would be purchased nearby at a plant located in the village of Santo Domingo and the Santana district, while a point of sale there would guarantee access to dairy products at a fair price and with quality.

And that was what was ultimately achieved. The processing of dairy products requires a self-management process resulting from contributions, collective fundraising activities, and donations from members, which has allowed them to acquire properties such as the plot of land and the vehicle. Although today (2018), after the activity has been in operation for 14 years (eight years since it began processing daily), there are few suppliers (members and residents of the area), its success continues to be evident, as does the interest of other residents of the district to join in the purchase of more milk.

The declaration of a ZRC (Regional Community of Rural Development) to execute participatory projects. Important agreements for the Association were 648 of 2012 and 310 of 2012, signed at the time with the Colombian Institute of Agrarian Reform (INCODER), the Local Development Fund, and the District Secretariat of Economic Development. Among other things, these agreements developed the Sustainable Development Plan for the Peasant Reserve Zone, applicable to the town of Sumapaz.

As part of the defense of the peasant economy and a comprehensive agrarian reform, ASOSUMAPAZ actively participated in the National Agrarian Strike in 2013, mobilizing, blocking, and agitating in the town of Usme for 15 days, providing support with firewood and food (potatoes, cheese, and other dairy products). This allowed them to strengthen their presence in Sumapaz and Usme, strengthen ties of solidarity with other peasant organizations and urban residents, invite other rural communities, such as those from the National Union of Educators (UNE) and Chipaque, and promote demands for the provision of materials and resources for farmers.

Subsequently, in 2015, and given the lack of legal implementation of the Sumapaz ZRC, one of the most important actions carried out in the territory was its declaration. ASOSUMAPAZ participated in this process along with other organizations. The document clarifies that "the organization that champions the fight to defend the ZRC is SINTRAPAZ," which at the time was established as the leading entity in the fight for the protection and defense of nature in the region. (Rojas, 2018)

A Peasant Reserve Zone (ZRC) is a form of territorial planning that, in addition to preventing land concentration and determining rural development, promotes environmental protection,

allowing its inhabitants to participate in territorial planning, eliminating, among other things, the antagonism between peasant producers and their permanence in the páramo.

The importance of ASOSUMAPAZ's commitment to implementing the Sustainable Development Plan for the Sumapaz Regional Zone (2014-2030) is undeniable, as it allowed them to gain greater knowledge of the territory, and also because of the importance the government placed on caring for the land, nature, and biodiversity.

Based on this Plan and with their knowledge of the locality, the Association and other farmers developed agroecological practices to apply on their farms and in the locality, modifying ancestral peasant customs and habits that were harmful to the land. This cooperation with the government for the development of projects or agreements that contribute to knowledge of the territory and respect peasant identity is a valuable form of empowerment, which ultimately also paved the way for the Association to engage with local organizations that exert influence in the territory, and for concrete actions to impact the territory.

Environmental defense is an element of the identity of páramo farmers. The town of Sumapaz also offers advantageous opportunities regarding water resources, the implementation of tourism projects, the exploitation and appropriation of natural resources, and more, which motivate national policies for their protection and conservation.

The commitments made by communities to manage the territory for common interests also motivate organizational scenarios, through organizational initiatives such as the Community Action Boards and Sintrapaz. These organizational responses are complemented by mobilization processes to reduce conflicts and generate alternatives for the preservation of life, rights, the moorland, and its peasant tradition, which influence each of the dynamics that arise in relation to these conflicts.

These same moorland communities, capable of managing their own spaces and developing their own plans, have also recognized the need to address environmental education in an attempt to modify the practices instilled in them by the green revolution, such as agricultural production, which causes harm to the peasant economy and environmental degradation.

More Visible Results

Initially, the dairy processing process was carried out in the Community Hall of the Santana district, Santo Domingo, until 2008, when our new Dairy Processing Plant was put into operation in the same area, where it still operates. This brought the advantage of being able to carry out operations in one location and better process dairy products, including yogurt, cheese, caramel, and others. Its clean, chemical-free, and high-quality production is noteworthy.

An important milestone in the technical consolidation of the processing process was the decision in 2012 to move to permanent operation. This would allow for:
1) the daily purchase of milk from local producers (members and non-members),
2) the availability of processed products every day, and
3) the hiring of dedicated marketing personnel. Currently, milk processing ranges from 300 to 500 liters, and when only cheese is processed, the yield can be between 75 and 125 pounds.

Regarding the territorial management process, Asosumapaz has entered into partnership agreements with the Sumapaz Local Mayor's Office, the District Secretariat of Economic Development, and INCODER (National Institute of Statistics and Census), which has allowed it to use public funds to benefit the community. Among them, Agreements No. 65 of 2010, No. 14 of 2012, and No. 72 of 2014 stand out, through which the 10th, 12th, and 14th Sumapaz Agro-Environmental Fairs were held. These agreements have contributed to strengthening agricultural practices in the area and fostering sociocultural integration among the residents of the townships. (Rojas, 2018)

The planning of these fairs within the framework of the stipulations in the contracts has allowed the association to investigate the attitudes and perceptions of the town's residents:

1) There is a high awareness of the need to carry out associative work beyond a space of personal gain to aim to improve the living conditions of the Sumapaz population.

"What we're aiming for is for any of our buyers to feel comfortable with this product, for anyone to be able to buy it. We're not just thinking about money, but about benefiting the community and society, those who have difficulty accessing these products" (Interview 3).

2) The associative approach has an emancipatory, transformative, and counter-hegemonic perspective, because the goal is for this activity to challenge monopolies for the milk market in the territory, supporting clean production that benefits the residents of the San Juan community, food sovereignty, and the defense of the territory.

“The ASOSUMAPAZ proposal has been a way for the land to provide better quality products. Smallholders will also have the option of developing other products that come from the land, and together we will have the peace of mind of providing good nutrition for our children, knowing that they are not chemically produced, and that it is our source of food” (Interview 7).

3) The organization's autonomy strengthens peasant roots and their economy through new self-management practices and the defense of native seeds.

“We are very aware of the importance of the work we have been doing. Even if some don't recognize it, those of us within the association are aware that we inhabit a territory, a very fragile, very delicate ecosystem, which is the páramo. We are aware of the agroecological process because, although it may not generate the resources or profits that conventional or chemical agriculture does, it does contribute to production. Regarding food quality, the profit lies in what we produce, which is for personal consumption (although some colleagues manage to sell their products). For us, it is a great benefit to be able to consume healthy food” (Interview 12).

Finally, on February 4, 2018, the Ministry of Agriculture and Development and the National Land Agency (ANT) officially presented the document creating the Sumapaz Peasant Reserve Zone (ZRC). This important act represents recognition of the struggles of peasant

organizations that, since 1998, through SINTRAPAZ, had formally requested this from the government of that time and subsequent ones, without receiving any response. It is noteworthy that on that same day, the ANT delivered 25 property titles, representing 95 hectares of productive land.

The ZRC concept, established by Law 160 of 1994, defines delimited geographic areas to foster the peasant economy, prevent land concentration and regulate its occupation, and promote the sustainable use of the jurisdiction's natural resources. The creation of a ZRC involves a participatory process in which peasant communities define their vision of sustainable development and develop a plan to manage their territory.